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The Humanist Pulpit

A Fourth Volume of Addresses

By

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Author of "The Fathers of Evolution," "The Humanist
Pulpit, Volume I," "The Humanist Pulpit, Volume II,"
"The Humanist Pulpit, Volume III."



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THE HUMANIST PULPIT

Volume IV

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FOREWORD

This book contains Series XII of the Humanist Pulpit, which is a monthly publication, each number containing one of my Sunday morning addresses. These are published, not of my own motive, but at the demand of the public for the benefit of those who are interested in our work but unable to attend our meetings. No special claim is advanced on their behalf. They are merely pieces cut off the web of my regular work. Several thousand copies of each address are printed and distributed in pamphlet form. And now a limited number of bound copies are thus available to those who desire them.

It should be remembered that the Unitarian Society of Minneapolis under whose auspices these addresses were delivered, maintains a free platform and is not responsible for the views here expressed—they simply reflect my own attitude of mind upon the various topics treated. —J. H. D.

Minneapolis,

May, 1930.

What Does It Mean to Be Spiritual?

THE whole world has at some time or other smiled at the old lady who found consolation in "that blessed word 'Mesopotamia'"; but a very large proportion of the smilers had blessed words of their own, and often there was no more ground for the emotion which these inspired than there was in the case of the Mesopotamia lady. I have had many similar experiences while speaking in foreign parts. People tell me that I delivered a fine lecture, but they do not consider it a religious discourse because it did not contain such familiar expressions as God and Jesus and salvation which they have always associated with religion and which therefore are necessary to arouse their religious emotions. A good instance is the controversy which recently took place between Mr. Ham and myself in the *Register*. He wanted to know if I believed in God. I said I would answer the question when he told me what he meant by the word God. He replied, "There is no question of definitions involved. The only question is, Does he believe in God or does he not? and if he does not believe in God, no matter what the word means, is he not an atheist?" Once I had an almost identical experience with that of the Mesopotamia lady. After I had finished an address, a lady told me that she was so glad that I had quoted from the writings of St. Paul, not realizing that I had quoted him in such manner as to make him appear ridiculous and to confound the very basis of her religion. So words are strange things. They

have been called the money of fools, but the counters of wise men. It is a happy expression; and just as your money may degenerate into a most deceitful piece of paper, scandalously suggesting a hoard of gold or goods that does not exist, so the word may become a delusive phantasy of the idea for which it once stood; and the feebleness or the more dissipated intelligence of a person or a generation, the greater the chance that mere words will pass as coin.

Such a word preeminently is "spirituality." While no one is able to define it or has a concrete idea of what it means, yet it suggests at once an unction, an exaltation of emotion, a superiority which are associated with hardly any other words in the English language. Spirituality is more profitable to a minister than long hair or a foreign name to a musician. Therefore, if one does not have it he assumes it, and that is why most of the ministers have such an artificial manner and such a smooth and hollow voice. A minister may be ignorant, he may be intellectually dishonest, he may be ethically indiscreet, his sermons may consist of empty vaporings, but if his manner, however assumed and artificial, suggests this subtle and indefinable thing which we call "spirituality," he is a success. In fact, most people seem to feel that spirituality is the *summum bonum* in human life. It makes the future of a novelist and raises every one to a superior plane. Creeds may come and go, saviors may shrink into moral heroes, bishops may lose their antique trimmings; but the future of humanity is safe if we only retain our faith in the spiritual and keep at bay that awful dragon which besets the race in every age—Materialism.

I

Now what do people mean by this indispensable and important thing which they call spiritual? Not long ago some one said to me, "Reason is not everything, there are other, perhaps finer powers in man. Why not consult them? Indeed, we feel that the world and human life as you sketch it, the logical consequences of your merciless logic, are repugnant to this finer spiritual nature of ours. We have a right to listen to it, and reject your apparently unimpeachable demonstrations." I think this person had in mind the

message of our finer emotions, which I consider quite as important as the message of reason, so do not think I am going to decry it, or despise it or ignore it; but may it not be possible to come to some clearer understanding of what we mean, when we say spiritual. For instance, not long ago I overheard a conversation between a man and a woman. I was surprised to find that they were discussing me. The man was telling the woman that I was an atheist (which I never have called myself) and he flattered me by adding that I seemed to be a learned and clever fellow. "Yes," she replied. "I grant that, but he is not spiritual." I wonder what she meant by that? Apparently some people have something that I have not, and this something is called spiritual. To tell the truth I have often heard this before, and for many years I have tried to find out exactly what it means. I have read many books on the subject—Spiritualist, Theosophist, Christian Scientist, Higher Thought, Hindu, Christian, and so forth—and I have questioned all sorts of people, and found only confusion.

Some people connect it with a kind of mysticism, an intuitive faculty, which man is supposed to possess if cultivated, and which acts as a sort of receiving station for messages which come from the infinite. Others connect it with that which they do not understand. I know people who will read pages upon pages of *Science and Health* which are absolutely meaningless and for this reason think it is spiritual. There are others who will spend hours upon hours in contemplation or meditation and feel that they are engaged in a spiritual task. Others use the term to cover the emotional life of man as distinguished from his intellectual life. Others call one spiritual when he is reverent, kindly, sympathetic and considerate. And a great many connect it with what I suggested a moment ago—a kind of artificiality, a pose, which people have cultivated for effect. To these, if a person is physically pale and weakly instead of stout and robust, if he is meek and merciful instead of bold and audacious, if he has a sweet and gentle voice instead of one that is rough and grating, if he is gracious, tolerant, mild, and so forth, he is considered spiritual. Admirable characteristics, most of them. Some have them naturally, and others, feeling the desirability of this spirituality, cultivate

them. That is why you find so many ministers, who are regular people during the week, assume all these characteristics the moment they step into the pulpit on Sunday morning. Some one wrote me during the week, that the spiritual are those who believe in a spiritual realm, as contrasted with a physical realm. I presume he means those who believe in spirit or mind as a substance, and not merely as a function of the material.

When I was in the orthodox ministry I could talk about spirituality as confidently as I could talk about material things; though I was only twenty-five years old. In our philosophy we defined the spirit as "substance without extension or parts" as distinguished from matter which has extension or parts. That sounds dry and cold perhaps, but I have searched the warm literature in vain for a better definition. I want to know in plain English what spirit is as distinguished from matter. I would like to get to the heart of the matter. What is it that the world is in danger of losing because of our modern materialism? What is spirit? No definition I have seen differs essentially from that taught me in the theological school twenty-five years ago, namely: Spirit is unextended qualitative substance, that is—non-quantitative. But all enthusiasm evaporates when you reduce the issue to those cold terms. Who can be profoundly moved over the question whether all reality is quantitative or some of it is not?

There is a mystic type of person who sweeps all this logic-chopping aside with an austere air of spiritual superiority. He knows, feels, or intues the spiritual. There is no need for any definition. Naturally there is no arguing with the person who knows; but I venture to say that this sort of thing is not superiority. It is not warmth of nature, or intuition, or refinement, or anything of the sort. It is simply intellectual incapacity and the illusion of mistaking introspective reflection for divine revelation. I have heard these people talk for hours about the spiritual intuitions; but it seems strange that these people cannot tell in a few plain intelligible words about the difference, especially, as they claim, when there is such a stupendous difference between the spiritual and the material that the world will perish if it

loses even the belief in the spiritual. Let us note that the loss of spirit or belief in the spirit is expected to have tremendous practical consequences. Perhaps we can get somewhere by this line of inquiry.

What are these supposed consequences? Decay of our spiritual faculties of course; but what are they? We push on resolutely through the mist. A hint is given us that morals may suffer. Why? Is a man going to be less temperate and honorable because he has come to the conclusion that there are no non-quantitative substances in existence? It would be just as logical to expect the collapse of civilization because Einstein has shown that space is curved. Artists, poets, novelists, dramatists, I understand are much more spiritual than men of science. But I had always heard that, as far as morals went. . . . No, that is a piece of the regrettable controversial stuff of an earlier age taken over by our modern mystics. What other points are suggested? I put this candidly to every religious person. When you contrast spiritualism and materialism in this respect do you not mean that the former stands for refined sentiment, healthy imagination, tenderness, generosity of mind, delicacy; and that the latter implies a rather vulgar, calculating, selfish, indelicate, unimaginative type of man or woman? If I am wrong I have read dozens of spiritual and mystic books in vain. But I think that is what most people mean.

So it follows that in this whole controversy there is a confusion of ideas, a double meaning. There are two meanings of the word spiritual—one the philosophical and theological meaning (unextended substance), and the other when the word is used to indicate those graces and qualities of mind and character which I have enumerated. Similarly there are two meanings of the word materialism—one the philosophical meaning that all things are quantitative, and the other the popular or literary meaning, when the word is used to denote the deterioration, the coarsening or vulgarizing of the mind or taste of a person or a civilization. There is no connection between the two meanings of each word, yet half the literature of this subject is useless because they are not kept clearly apart. Now

in regard to the philosophical difference it does not matter two pins what the ordinary person thinks. Some one says, do you mean to imply that it does not make any difference whether a man is a materialist or a spiritualist? That is precisely what I am trying to make clear. So far as this life and its finest requirements are concerned, it does not matter. Of course it matters vitally in connection with the question of immortality, with which we are not concerned this morning. But it quite obviously does not matter in connection with man's highest interests on earth. Whether we grow more gross, more selfish, more grasping, more vulgar, more dishonorable, or whether we grow more delicate, more tender, more sympathetic, more aspiring, or more affectionate does not depend on whether we think the mind quantitative or qualitative. It depends on what we think of the values of those qualities. And I for one choose these so-called spiritual qualities of mind and character because for me they contain the most enduring and highest joys of earth. Therefore, in this practical sense I am a firm believer in the spiritual life. And when I use the term as I frequently do, it is in this sense that I use it.

II

Well then, being a believer in the spiritual life, I want to know something more about its nature and its origin. At this point, I thought of Henry Drummond's attempt to apply the natural laws to the spiritual world, and it occurred to me that if there is such a thing as the spiritual life it must have a science of its own, and it must be more or less similar to the science of the physical life. It must deal with the same problems, seek answers to the same inquiries, use the same methods of investigation, as the science of the physical life. In short there must be a sort of biology of the spiritual life. And so I am going to follow the methods of biology in our attempt to understand the spiritual life, that is, use the same method of study as in our attempt to understand the physical life. First in regard to its nature.

What is life, either physical or spiritual? Of what elements is it composed? In what terms is it to be described? Such questions, of course, bring us face to face with the

greatest mystery of our existence. Millions of words have been written, thousands of books have been published, on this problem of life—what it means, how it is to be understood; but never so far as I know has anyone, except the Fundamentalists of course, been able to discover what it really is. The nearest approach that has ever been made to the solution of this problem is found in what is known in contemporary science as “the energy concept of life.” At bottom of course this is only the substitution of one word for another. To say that life is energy is only to raise the question as to what energy is, just as the ancient teaching that the earth rests on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, only raises the question as to what the tortoise is standing on. But if the definition of life as energy does not tell us very much, it at least suggests certain pictures, which help us to understand some of the practical phases of the problem. For energy conveys to us the idea of motion and activity. Inside a living organism we see a source of power, which by some manner is released in terms of movement. Outside the living organism, we see certain results achieved, certain things effected by this release of power. Put a non-living object in an environment and nothing happens. Put a living object in this environment, and something does happen. Energy, in other words, or life in terms of energy is a creative principle. It has the capacity to start itself; and when it starts, a long series of results transpire. Sometimes these results seem altogether out of proportion to the cause. The electric energy transmitted through a small copper wire is capable of moving a long and heavy train of cars. The energy hidden away in a microscopic atom, we are told, might blow the earth to bits. But the connection between cause and effect here is always real. Life is energy—by which we mean it is the creator or initiator of movement, change, development. We are different from moment to moment because the life principle is at work within us.

Of course, I have been speaking of physical life, but this same idea applies to spiritual life as well. What we mean by spiritual life is just as much a mystery in religion as physical life is in biology. The theologians have tried to make things plain by inventing a lot of big words, such as

incarnation, regeneration, salvation; but such words only add confusion to the mystery. I do not think we can say anything more about this spiritual life than that it is a form of energy—by which we mean that it is a source of power which when released is capable of producing changes in the outer world. We may not know what this power is, but we can see what it is doing in the outer world. In other words physical energy is not the only energy that is at work among men. Steam, electricity, muscular contraction, are not the only forms of power which are moving the world. There is another kind of power—that which we think of as the mental or spiritual life. What it is we do not know. How it works we cannot say. But that it is a reality is a fact we cannot deny.

Take a word for example or an idea—the purely spiritual phenomenon of thought in its spoken or written form. Think of the energy that is released by a thought, and how this energy sweeps through the centuries like fire across a parched prairie. The power of thought,” says Bertrand Russell, “is greater than any other human power. . . . It is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man.” Think of the teachings of Socrates, how they have come to human ears in every generation like chords of noble music, lifting men to dreams of beauty and deeds of sacrifice. Take Jesus for example, and think of the changes that have taken place in the world because of the thoughts which have been ascribed to him. Or think of Tolstoy or Voltaire, or Abraham Lincoln or Ingersoll, and the tremendous influence of their thought and the changes brought about in the world as a result of their words.

But words are not the only form of spiritual energy. A deed is even more potent than a word—a deed of heroism or sacrifice, and just as truly an effluence of the spirit. It is possible that the words of Socrates might have endured had he not drunk the hemlock; but it is certain that this martyrdom added an incalculable amount of energy to what he taught. So with Jesus. It is hardly likely that his words would have been treasured and elevated had it not been for the deed of heroism which brought his life to a termination.

Or as an example of the deed without the word, take John Brown at Harper's Ferry. What this old man was able to do in the flesh was trivial; he was seized and put out of the way very easily, but what about his spirit? This was a force so great that it moved armies, shook continents, and turned the tide of history. It was more valuable to the northern cause in the Civil War than a hundred regiments. It was true that John Brown's body lay a mouldering in the tomb; but it was also true that his soul went marching on.

And we need not confine ourselves to historical examples of the spiritual life as a form of energy, working vast changes in the world. Is there any one of us who has not met this energy in his own experience as surely as he has felt the shock or seen the illumination of an electric current? Cannot you remember hearing a word or reading a thought which has transformed your whole life? Have you not encountered some noble deed which has lifted you above the ordinary affairs of life? Have you not met men and women whose personalities have literally poured strength into your lives, so that you have found it possible to do things which you could not do before? Talk about spiritual life as energy! There is nothing to compare with it from the standpoint of results. Take the world as we find it today. Trace back its phenomena to the ultimate causes from which they sprang. Recognize to the full the physical forces of nature—attraction, repulsion, heat, electricity. Emphasize to the uttermost the social and economic factors in human development—food, climate, soil, production, distribution, transportation. Count in every natural force ever discovered and every machine ever invented, and still you have not explained the world. Something else has been at work—the spirit of man. In other words, there is an energy which springs from the heart of man. What it is we do not know, any more than we know what electricity is. How it works, we cannot say, anymore than we can say how radio-activity works. But that it is real, that it produces results, is as certain as that we breathe. It is thus that for pragmatic reasons we accept the spiritual life as one of the elements of the universe. The spirit of man, like the forces of nature, and like the physical life, is at bottom, energy.

III

When we study biology we find that a second important question arises in respect to physical life, and that is in regard to its origin, as to where this peculiar thing we call life came from. And this question of its origin is quite as baffling as that in regard to its nature. In answer there are two surmises, or speculations.

In the first place there is the view that something new entered this planet with the appearance of physical life. A germinating seed derived from some foreign source found lodgment upon the earth, and from this primeval seed have sprung all the myriad forms of life. Where this seed came from and how it got here, no one presumes to know. It has been suggested that it may have come from a neighboring planet on some meteor, or that it may have descended in the rain from heaven. All such notions, of course, are purely fantastic. What we have here is simply the assertion that there is an absolute gulf of separation between living and non-living matter, and that the two came together from different sources and as the result of accident.

The other opinion and the one that has behind it the authority of modern science, is that life arose directly by the process of evolution from the material substance of the earth. There is no absolute division between dead matter and living matter; it is not necessary to imagine that something new appeared on this planet with the advent of physical life. On the contrary these living forms of plants and animals developed as naturally from the chemical elements in the primeval slime, as the reptile developed from the fish or the bird from the reptile. What happened exactly, when the non-living became the living, we cannot say; all we know is that from the beginning the elements in this universe were constantly undergoing changes in their relation to one another, and finally there came a moment when certain energies pre-existing in the cosmos fell into a certain combination with the chemical elements already existing, and life was the result. The nature of this combination has for years been the subject of investigation by distinguished scientists who are determined to bring about an artificial

form of life in their laboratories. Whether they succeed or not, we must believe with them "that life arose from a re-combination of forces pre-existing in the cosmos." The line of evolution, in other words, is unbroken, it suffers no intrusion from without.

Now it is interesting to notice when we turn from physical to spiritual life, that these same two opinions make their appearance in philosophical discussion. The biology of the spirit is identical with the biology of the body in the answers it offers as to the origin. Thus traditionally we have the idea that the spirit, or the higher aspect of man's nature, has entered into his being from without. This is the picture that is given to us in Genesis, where God is represented as forming man out of the dust of the earth and then breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. And it was this breathing into him of the divine spirit that made him a living soul. And this idea has been held by some modern scientists, though very few. For instance, Alfred Russell Wallace taught that there is no way of accounting for the higher elements of man's nature except by an influx of some portion of the spirit of deity. Just how or when this influx of spiritual life into the material world took place, Wallace does not explain. He simply affirms that in the very necessity of the case, it must have come not from within, but from without.

This idea, however, finds little support, in the scientific world today. A second opinion as to the origin of spiritual life, identical with that of physical life, is the one which is finding general acceptance. Just as we have seen that the life force in its lower forms, developed out of the chemical and physical forces of nature by an unbroken process of evolution, so we see now that the spirit of man developed out of this same life force in its higher stages of fulfillment. Says Professor Le Conte, "There was a time in the history of the earth when only physical forces existed, but at a certain stage chemical affinity developed into the earliest and simplest form of physical life force. This life force took on higher and higher forms until finally what we call the spiritual appeared—a new and wondrous thing, but still nothing more than the life force derived from preceding forms."

Spiritual life, therefore, is just as much a development out of what has gone before in the evolutionary process as physical life is; which means that the origin of spiritual life is from within, and not as the old theology would have it from without.

And so the spiritual life today is not something separate and apart from man, which operates through him, but an expression of the combined functions of the human organism. Thus far I have been dealing with the spiritual life as though it included the whole of that energy which we think of in contrast to physical energy, but which is more frequently thought of as the mental realm. It was necessary to do this in order to make the distinction which I have in mind. For I want to show you that what we call the spiritual life is merely one phase of the mental activity, and is a word which we use for convenience more than anything else. For instance, the mental life expresses itself in various ways, which for convenience of speech we call the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual. These are not different mental processes, they are merely different realms on which the mental process is brought to bear. Today we regard human life as a unit, the mental life as simply a portion of the manifestations of that unified life, and the spiritual life as simply a portion of this mental life, operating in such manner as to distinguish it from the intellectual life or the moral life or the emotional life. There are things which we speak of as being spiritual, just as there are things which we speak of as being moral and things intellectual, but they are all parts of the mental life which in turn is merely a portion of the unified life of man. They are all forms of human activity.

Perhaps a good way to bring out what I have in mind would be to say that the spiritual is a term for activities concerned with the higher human values in all their manifestations. It is human activity which alone is spiritual. Seen in this light it will be quickly realized that it is absurd to contrast the spiritual with the physical. The proper contrast is to those activities which lie below the level of the spiritual. So, you see it is entirely a matter of values, which we ourselves must determine. What one person considers

spiritual may not be considered spiritual at all by another. But I think most people would agree that the spiritual emerges when there is intelligence of a fairly high order, a sense of right and wrong, an ability to set up standards, a drive for creation in art and in social relations, a wealth of imagination. The spiritual is nothing more nor less than that function of human life which manifests itself in the more refined and delicate attitudes of mind.

IV

Now this idea of the natural or evolutionary origin of the spiritual life as a whole, and this thought that the spiritual is simply one of the manifestations of mental activity, makes a complete change in our conception of religion. What it accomplishes at bottom is the elimination of all that we mean by the supernatural. Hitherto we have always divided our world into two parts, theologically speaking—the natural and the supernatural, the earth here and the heaven up there, man here on earth and God up there in heaven. In the same way we have divided our practical life into the natural and the supernatural—or as we speak of it the physical and the spiritual, the sacred and the secular. The Bible is a sacred book because written by God, while other books are secular because written by men; the church is a sacred institution because supernatural in origin and dealing with spiritual things; while the state is a secular institution because natural in origin and dealing with worldly things; a sermon is a sacred discourse because it deals with heavenly or eternal subjects, while a lecture is a secular discourse because it deals with worldly or temporal subjects. In the same way we have conceived of man's religious or spiritual life as the problem of conversion or regeneration—that is, the problem of getting rid of the nature of which he was born on the earth and which is therefore "of the earth earthy," and substituting in its place a new nature which has its origin in heaven, and is therefore heavenly or spiritual.

But all this is now swept away by this new idea of the natural origin of the human spirit, and the acceptance of the theory that what we call the spiritual is simply a phase of man's mental life. We see today that there is no such thing

as this arbitrary division between natural and supernatural, flesh and spirit. All the spiritual there is, is right here in this world and definitely connected with the flesh. With this standpoint we see how ridiculous and false is the arbitrary distinction between things sacred and things secular. Everything we see in the human world has come from the life-process that is behind. Everything that is a part of the social life of man is a creation of his being and a projection of his spirit. In this sense every thing is neither sacred nor secular, but just natural and normal, because it is all the outgrowth of the same thing. Plato is as sacred as the Bible, the state as divine an institution as the church, a sermon no more spiritual because it talks about man's soul and heavenly mansions, than a political address which talks about man's body and earthly tenements. Of course, we may speak of some things as more sacred or more spiritual than others, but this is purely a matter of values which we ourselves ascribe to them, and not because there is any essential difference in their origin or nature.

As for man himself, he is no more to be saved by substituting some outside spiritual nature for his inside human nature, than he is to be educated by scooping out his brains and substituting the brains of an angel. All the salvation that man will ever gain must be found within himself just as he is. All the spiritual life that he will ever find, is the life that he is now living when developed to its highest and noblest possibilities. This religious business therefore is a matter not of conversion, but of education, not of substitution from without, but of development from within. The spiritual life is attained not by putting on a whole lot of artificial pieties, but by fulfilling to the uttermost the ordinary commonplace virtues of daily life. St. Paul was greatly mistaken in his contrasts of the flesh and the spirit, but he had the right idea when he said that "the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." To be spiritual is simply to be nobly human, it is to be sincere, honest, reverent, high-minded, just, and noble in all our dealings. And it is to the development of this kind of spiritual life that scientific and humanistic religion addresses itself. Not for the sake

of the development of the spiritual as something in itself, but because in so far as those things which we call the spiritual life of man are developed, human life in general will become more desirable. They are the things that make life worth while; they are the things, which if properly developed, will make life beautiful.

So there is no such thing as the spiritual, as distinguished from the physical. The only spiritual there is, is a function of the physical. And what we mean by the spiritual is simply certain phases of the mental function, which deal with the higher values of human life. Some physical organisms naturally function in this manner, others need to develop this type of expression. But the important thing is really to develop it, and not assume an artificial attitude, which pretends to have it when it does not. For the very essence of spirituality is integrity, honesty, sincerity.

The Folly of Half-Way Liberalism

IT IS with a deep sense of concern that I have entered upon this year's work in the pulpit. More profoundly than ever do I realize the crying need for a courageous, intelligent, and positive declaration of the principles of liberal religion. Unless this declaration is made with all the seriousness and earnestness born of a sincere conviction in the minds and hearts of the liberals of America, we are headed for one of the worst periods of irreligion in the history of western civilization. Nothing can give to the confused religious aspirations in our country a commanding place in the life of this century except a great awakening and articulation of the scattered voices of religious liberalism. During the summer, I have been trying to "get a line on," so to speak, the religious life of America. I have listened to and read about the inanities of the popular religion. I have seen the ugliness and superstition and fear that parade under the holy banner of religion. I have become more conscious than ever of the depths to which the popular religion has sunk; and likewise of the timid and halting and compromising way in which the liberals are trying to meet the situation. I feel ashamed when I see the multitudes of people cowed by superstitious fear; but I feel more ashamed of the thoughtless complacency among the liberals of this generation, and more than ashamed of the encouragement which that complacency receives from the reactionary leadership of those who assume to wear the mantle of religious liberalism, yet who, either

through a caution born of wordly ambitions, or through a mind enfeebled by the lack of intellectual discipline, or through a soul too weak to bear the rigors of an open sea, persist in giving comfort and aid to all those forces of reaction which have bound their souls in the horrible shackles of fear and darkness.

Against such complacency and against the leadership which nourishes it, I believe it is high time to launch a crusade. It is time for a concerted and determined advance on the part of all those who abhor the fogginess of present-day liberalism, on the one hand, and the mire of barbarous mediaevalism into which orthodoxy has sunk, on the other. Let me, therefore, be plain. I believe absolutely in the development and formulation of a religion compatible with the facts of nature and of human experience as they have been revealed to us by modern science. This theory liberalism has always professed, but never practised. It has advanced with undue caution and timidly compromised with the established religion. Like so many other mediating positions, it is losing significance as the issues become clearer. A compromise between the supposed eternal truth of historic Christendom, and the relative changing truth of a growing world, liberalism is in a dilemma. It was an attractive movement in the earlier days when the liberals appeared as the creators of a fresh and vital Christianity, carrying the values of an outgrown past into new embodiment as a new religion. In this task it was necessary to face both ways, but a vital religion is not two-faced. It faces forward and the past lives only by losing itself in the present. The average liberal faces both backward and forward. He straddles a fissure between two radically different worlds of thought, and the opening continues to widen. He must soon decide which way he is going, else he will fall to ruin in the chasm. Either side of his precarious position offers a secure footing, but there is no standing ground between them. Orthodox Fundamentalism is a consistent system for those who refuse to face modern knowledge and who can and will stay wholly within its logical barricades. Scientific naturalism carried through consistently on the social and human level yields a vital religious world view and program. But one must choose, he cannot forever stand

haltingly between these two positions. It must be either one or the other. It cannot be both one and the other. A compromise between these two positions ends in the dilemma of half-way liberalism.

Lest I be too severe on this type of thought, I might say a word in excuse, but not in justification of it. These half-way liberals are doing what all liberal religious leaders in the past have tried to do. They have attempted to face the issues of the present and at the same time to save the traditional values. The difficulty is in the materials. The old religion was grounded in the truth of revelation from a divine and supernatural world. Church and program of salvation had authority from that source. The doctrines, terminology, technique, and attitudes of orthodox Christianity were all involved in that view of reality. But today educated men live in an entirely different universe. The natural, social, and religious sciences have undermined every phase and form of the inherited philosophy. The whole method of approach has been changed from a naive and primitive way of thinking to a realistic way dictated by scientific knowledge. It is radically different and it has definitely discredited the theologies and religious philosophies of the past. Between the old and the new there is a complete break of continuity. The new does not fulfill the old, it starts from different premises. The plight of half-way liberalism follows from the futile effort to put new wine into old bottles, to make the new seem to be the old, to save the old by absorbing its meaning in the new. It may be excused on the basis that this has been the method of religious reformers in the past. But in all the eras of the development of religions since the primitive dawn, there has never been such a cleavage between the old world and the new. Categories that have been valid for hundreds of years have become useless. This compromising liberalism played its useful part while the last two generations in Europe and America were becoming accustomed to the change in intellectual climate; but it has no attractions for the citizens of the new world.

The difficulties of the half-way liberal all flow from his position of mediation and compromise. Since he tries to

keep the old truth and yet cannot retain it in the ancient sense, his terminology becomes equivocal. His use of words is vague and obscure. He juggles them to suit his purposes. Authority, revelation, salvation, sin, immortality, God—all meaningful terms in the orthodox faith, can no longer be used except with mental reservation. So there is a loss of frankness in speaking, and a loss of clarity in thinking. A religion that seeks to appeal to the leadership of thought in this age will make no headway by a muddled compromise. It is necessary to make the issue clear, and call the people to a definite choice. One day as Wendell Phillips was going forth to deliver one of his great messages, his wife who lay sick abed, dismissed him with these parting words: "Now, Wendell, whatever you do, don't shilly-shally." For a generation now liberal religion, when brought face to face with a vital parting of the ways has hedged and shuffled and shilly-shallied. Here and there individual men have stood out, free and unhampered, but the majority have compromised and been discreet.

I pause here to recall an instance from romantic fiction which may serve as a parable. You are acquainted with Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*. You remember the long flight of David Balfour and Alan Breck which brought them to that thundering mountain torrent. They must cross this torrential stream or stand the risk of being overtaken and hanged as rebels and murderers. While standing on a rock halfway across, there came on David a deadly sickness of fear, and he covered his eyes with his hand. Alan knew the danger and the fell issue of the crisis. Behind were the soldiers with the gallows looming in the rear. In front was the roaring stream, with its certainty to take the life out of him who came short of the leap. Alan shouted and stamped upon the rock, but the roaring of the falls and the trouble of his mind prevented David from hearing. Then Alan, putting his hand to his mouth, and his mouth to David's ear, shouted, "Hang or drown"; and leaped to the farther side. David had just wit enough to know that if he did not leap at once, he should never leap at all, so flung himself forward with a kind of despair. He just landed, slipped, and was sliding back

into the stream when Alan seized him by the hair and dragged him to safety.

This story sets forth the choice before the liberals today. "Hang or drown," that is the dread alternative for those who have not the courage to make the leap; and like David they lack the courage to take the leap to the farther shore of scientific truth. They stand midway in the raging torrent of modern thought and life, not daring to go back for fear of meeting a traitor's death at the hands of disappointed humanity, nor daring to go forward for fear of being submerged amid the complex problems and movements, currents and cross-channels which go to make up the dumb-foundering whole we call modern life. Modern liberalism is haunted by a cowardly fear of consequences. The consideration "What may it lead to?" has held it and its supporters back from the leadership of men. Like David in midstream, liberalism has ever wriggled about to find excuses for remaining on the rock, for declining to leap across. It looks pathetically around on its dwindling resources and asks "How much is left?" It prints volumes of apologies to show that the new is just the old in a more fashionable dress. It would like to leap back and is afraid to leap forward. It is taking the chance either of being dragged back with a rope 'round its neck to "hang"; or of abiding high and dry upon the rock, refusing to take the plunge forward lest it drown among the currents and tides of modernism. Unless its whole attitude is changed its doom is certain. It has been pronounced by Alan Breck. It must either "hang or drown."

I

Thus far I have been speaking generally about the choice which it is necessary for modern liberalism to make, let me now try to be more concrete by facing some of the definite decisions which liberals are called upon to face. In that provocative book *Can We Still be Christians?* Prof. Eucken comments on that "sharp either-or which runs through the whole of man's life and finds its clearest expression in religion." This has come to be thought of as the philosophy of either-or in contrast to the philosophy

of both-and, which seems to dominate the modern liberal. He is constantly telling us that things are *both* this *and* that, instead of *either* this *or* that. Would that our modern liberal would take the bull by the horns and grapple decisively with that tremendous either-or. Either the things of which religion speaks are realities, or they are illusions. If they are realities, let us embrace them. If they are illusions, let us dismiss them. In either case we must know; and to know we must inquire, we must search, we must make a decision. Or if the things of religion are partly true and partly illusive, still we must inquire and search to ascertain the facts. There is nothing derogatory in an honest decision, either on one side or the other. We may honestly believe or we may honestly disbelieve. The one dishonest thing is to believe one thing and pretend to believe another, or to believe one thing and so disguise our thought by misleading terms as to give the impression that we believe another.

To reach a conclusion here it is necessary to apply this same principle to some of the more important features of religion. Let us look first at the source of religion itself. Whence came religion? Here we find Prof. Eucken's either-or helpful. Either religion is something that has been revealed to us by some higher power, or it is a natural product of human ideals and aspirations which have been sanctioned by tradition and society. In other words, either religion is revealed or it is natural. Either it is of God or it is of man. Here is a vital issue and there is no way of side-stepping it. The decision which a man makes here will consciously or unconsciously determine every act of his life. Either he must turn to God for every ray of light which he may hope to receive in the realm of truth and right, or he must turn to the results of the study and experience of men and his own inner consciousness. There is no middle way, and yet the average liberal halts between these two opinions, and thinks of religion as natural and yet somehow revealed, as something a little more than the result of man's experience. To the careful and courageous student of religious history, there is only one choice, namely: that religion is the natural product of the peculiar human

organism in its contact with and adaptation to its environment.

Turn to what is said to be the revelation of God to men—the Bible. Here again we apply Eucken's either-or. Either the Bible is the word of God or it is not. Either it was written by men to whom God dictated his will, or it was written by men just as other books have been written by men. Again there is no middle course. The one alternative fits in naturally with the theory of revealed religion, the other with the idea of natural religion. It is without logic or sense to think of this book, as halfway liberals do, as being not the word of God and yet somehow different from all other books. If there is a God who has revealed himself unto men, and if this Bible is such a revelation, then the supreme object of human life should be to know and obey this book; for compared with knowing and doing the will of God there is nothing else in this world worth while. But on the other hand, if it is merely a collection of the early literature of a certain period of the Jewish people, then of what more authority is it than a collection of the literature of the English or American or any other people? It may indeed be a valuable portion of the religious literature of the world; but its authority is no greater than the authority of the truth which it contains.

Yet the great majority of liberals stand here halting between two opinions, saying that although the Bible is not the word of God, yet it somehow is a different book from all the others in the world, having a quality of inspiration about it that is unique, that sets it apart. They feel a little shocked and troubled if you place the Bible on the same level with Shakespeare or Goethe, if you propose to study and criticize it by precisely the same methods, if you treat it simply as a human production. A melancholy evidence of the cloudiness with which these liberals' thinking envelops the Bible is afforded by no less a scholar than Washington Gladden, who after showing that the Bible is not the infallible word of God, says: "But I can imagine that someone may be saying, 'If all this is true, then the Bible is no more than any other book.' No, that does not follow. Between the two statements 'literally and verbally

infallible' and 'no more than any other book' there is a long distance, and one can be far from the first without being any where near the second. . . . One may refuse to accept the traditional view of the Bible and still be very far from saying that it is reduced to the level of a purely human production." I merely refer to this passage in Dr. Gladden's well-known book *How much is left of the Old Doctrines?* as one of a thousand instances of similar sayings by men of the liberal Christian type, who are doing more than anyone else to befuddle the minds of the people. Either the Bible is the word of God or it is the words of men. And anyone familiar with the results of the higher criticism and the study of comparative literature knows which.

Again, think of the method that shall be used in the interpretation of religion and the Bible. Shall we use the traditional and theological method or shall we use the scientific and historical method? In other words, shall we interpret everything in the light of the traditions and dogmas of the church, or shall we interpret them in the light of science and history? In the one case, men postulate a theory and then interpret the world and human life in such manner as to make it fit the theory. In the other, men begin, not with a theory, but with the observation of facts, and then postulate such theory as these facts suggest. Here again the majority of our liberals stand midway between, pretending to use the scientific method and yet permitting all their conclusions to be colored by their reverence for the traditional elements of their faith. They use the scientific method in the investigation of all so-called secular problems, but the moment they turn to religion they fall back upon the traditional method. That is why even liberal religion is still at odds with science. Its creeds and standards remain grotesquely antiquated; laughably out of line with the facts and methods of physical science and the teaching of history. Listen to the Bishop of Oxford, "You can hardly exaggerate the disaster it has been to the education of children that they have been taught to associate with religion things about the creation, the flood, and the beginnings of our race which it was infallibly certain, when they grew up to read the literature of their time, they would find false and would re-

ject as alien to the whole trend of the philosophy, science, and history of their day." And yet that same Bishop of Oxford mumbles through his mediaeval creeds and prayers and litanies every day of his life. This is the kind of thing liberals are doing all the time, standing timidly between the traditional and scientific methods of interpretation, unwilling to accept either in its entirety. Yet I am sure of one thing, and that is that liberal religion has no future save as it remains utterly faithful to the scientific spirit. This means on the one hand that it must accept the conclusions of modern science in every department of learning, and on the other that it must use in its own particular inquiries the principles and standards of the scientific method.

II

So far, I have spoken of religion, its origin, its supposed revelation, the method of interpreting it. Now let me speak of theology. Here the same thorough-going decision has to be made—not merely among the several dogmas of Christianity, as to which is true and which is false, which is to be accepted and which rejected, but with regard to the complete body of Christian doctrine. The question is, shall we accept or reject dogmatic Christianity. Either the one alternative or the other, for when you examine the structure of Christian doctrine, you find that it is of one piece, all compact. It admits of no alteration or repair. Remove one dogma and the entire structure tumbles about the ears of the churchmen who uphold it. The builders of the creeds may have been deficient in ethics but they were masters of logic and metaphysic. They built their creeds solid as they built their cathedrals. The Catholic church has the sense to see this. That is why it stoutly resists all innovation and change. The Catholic church, as I have said many times before, is the only logical form of Christianity. It stands for the scheme, the whole scheme, and nothing but the scheme. Either we must accept this scheme or we must reject it.

If we ask what the principle dogma of Christianity is, we must answer the incarnation. The incarnation means that the eternal God took upon himself the human form,

and did this in order that he might offer sufficient atonement for the awful human guilt which came as the result of the disobedience of the first man, and be able to forgive it; thus satisfying love and vindicating justice, and completing the scheme with heaven for the elect and hell for the damned. The incarnation, therefore, is the central pillar of the structure. It is the foundation of the temple, the keystone of the arch. Remove it and the whole thing tumbles. The other distinctive doctrines such as the miraculous birth, the atonement, the resurrection, the ascension, the trinity, heaven and hell, are the necessary inferences, the inevitable developments, the logical results of the dogma of the incarnation. There is no logical half-way house. You must accept all or reject all, up to the fairy heaven and down to the fiendish hell. Yet, here again, we find these half-way liberals claiming to be Christians while they reject the structure of Christian dogma.

Now this prodigious dogmatic pyramid of Christianity rests, as I had said, upon the theory of the incarnation; that is, upon Jesus—the person and work of Jesus, the cosmical significance of Jesus, the metaphysical nature of Jesus, not to mention the small matter of the historical existence of Jesus. The God-head became the God-man—that is the core of Christianity. Take that away and the wall and buttresses fall apart. Here then is an issue of the most tremendous importance, and we can again apply the either-or of Prof. Eucken. Jesus was either god or man. Which? “I have no illusion left,” said the tireless wit, Sydney Smith, “but the archbishop of Canterbury.” But, let me say, the archbishop of Canterbury—illusion or no illusion—is possible only because of the illusion about the God-man. It is the God-man who brings the archbishop on the scene. The God-man could not be created and expounded and defended and kept going without the archbishop. Nay, the whole portentous array of them, from humblest acolyte to enthroned pope, are the necessary and inevitable products of the dogma of the God-man. Which reminds me again of that satirical wit, Benjamin Disraeli, to whom the liberal dean of Westminster was holding forth against dogma, when he was stopped in mid-career by the

politician's shrewd aphorism, "That is all very well, Stanley; but remember, no dogma, no dean." That was a home thrust—no dogma, no dean!

Well, then we have to make up our minds about the dogma of the God-man. Either Jesus was God or he was man. Which? That is an issue which cannot be put off forever by men and women of intelligence. Only when viewed as God can Jesus be regarded as the unquestioned lord and master of the human race to whom all ages must continue to bow. Only as God can he be the accepted type and standard and pattern of what all human life and character must be, to the end of time, and amid every variety of people. If, on the other hand, he was man, then to make him an object of worship, however pure his humanity might be, is idolatry—the kind of idolatry from which, if he correspond at all to the gospel pictures of him, he would have fled in horror. If he was Jesus the Christ, the second person in the trinity, then the entire scheme of theology and the whole structure of ecclesiasticism is justified and is necessary; but, if Jesus was man, we dare not make him the permanent center of a cult, we dare not pledge the future of humanity to him in an oath of unconditional obedience.

There is the tendency among liberals today, it is the tendency I regret to say in certain quarters of Unitarianism, to deny the deity of Jesus, but to place him on a pinnacle as the greatest teacher and the most sublime revelation of the good that has ever lived. The great cry among half-way liberals is to return to the teachings of Jesus, for therein lies the secret of all good. "Back to Jesus," we hear on every hand. The Christianity of the churches is a corruption of the teachings of Jesus, let us have a "renewed Christianity," let us have the "Christianity of Jesus." "The churches must return to the pure teachings of Jesus." Why? "Because Jesus was the greatest moral teacher the world has ever seen." Now, if Jesus was God, then we might well return to him; but if Jesus was man, like any other teacher, then why all this ado about him? Why should we not depart from him or advance beyond him, just as we depart from and advance beyond any other teacher?

Why must we stop with him? Why must we interpret everything in the name of Jesus? Let me remind you of a few facts; and what I say, may it be understood, is said in reverence and admiration of everything that Jesus ever said or did or was; but it must be said in the interest of truth and clear thinking. Jesus was not an educated man; he had never come into contact with the rudiments of what we consider education today. He had no business or political experience. He never traveled for study or observation; probably never having been over fifty miles from his isolated home. He was not surrounded with men of culture or extensive knowledge; his only associates being rough country fishermen. He never met the great minds or leaders of the day, who lived in Rome and Greece. He kept in the ranks of the rear guard of humanity. He led the life of a hermit with "no place where to lay his head." He lived in all probability on charity. He was never married nor had children; or if we accept the gospel records, any sex experience at all; and he died at the age of thirty. How could so young and so untutored and so inexperienced a man, unless he was God, be accepted as "the greatest teacher the world has ever seen?" I should be very glad to have someone explain to me how this young Jew, unless he was God, managed to make himself the intellectual and moral colossus of the ages. I confess it would be much easier for me to believe in the orthodox Jesus than in this Jesus who was a man and yet somehow different from other men. No, we must say of Jesus what we said of the Bible a moment ago. If he was man, then his teachings have just as much authority as the truth they contain, and no more; and this also may be said of every other teacher the world over. This phase of hero-worship or cult-worship, through which liberalism is passing, is not and cannot possibly remain a permanent condition. There is no middle way. Every attempt at compromise crumbles at the touch of that relentless either-or. Slowly but surely science and historical criticism are driving the half-way liberals to make a decision. What that decision will be admits of no doubt. It will not be the decision of the Nicene creed.

III

This course of thought drives us down and ever down towards the deepest and most fundamental and most vital of all issues—I was going to say the issue between theism and atheism, but that decision has practically been made, or perhaps I should say, never can be made because it is beyond the scope of man's knowledge. But this, after all, is an issue largely of terms. Everybody believes in some great force permeating the universe. If he does not call it God, it is because the word God has been identified with so many crude and impossible things that he does not wish to risk misunderstanding. But so far as men's practise is concerned there is still an important choice to be made, and that is the choice between theism and humanism, between the theory that this world is controlled by an almighty personal being outside of it, or by men inside of it. And here is our sharp either-or again. Either God controls the world or men control it; either we must look to God for help or we must depend upon ourselves; either we should praise and honor God for all that has been accomplished in the world, or we should praise and honor men. We cannot always halt as we do today between two opinions—talking about a God-governed world and living as though it were a man-governed world. Let us try to understand the significance of this choice.

There are two theories of the world—the theistic view which holds that the world is under the control of a supernatural being, that everything that is done is done in accordance with his will, and that without his will nothing can be done. The other is the humanistic view which teaches that everything that is done in this world is done by man in accordance with the laws of nature. In the theistic order, all acts whatsoever are the result of the will of the supreme being, man's will or action amounting to little or nothing except as a medium for God's will. At best man can only pray and hope. If he wants more rain, let him pray. If he wants freedom from disease, let him petition his God. If he wants food, let him ask and perhaps some raven will bring it. If he fears any natural force, such as wind, fire, storm, let him pray for protection

from his God. In this view, all the evils of the world are considered a necessary part of the supernatural order of things, and hence little effort has been made to remove them. The believers in this kind of a world did not attempt to banish illness; for illness was simply a visitation of the divine wrath. They made no attempt to abolish poverty, for they consoled themselves with the thought of their master "The poor ye have always with you" and "Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The humanistic view of the world order holds that this is man's world, and that it depends upon man what the world shall be like. The adherents of this view, hold that if man wants more water, he must build reservoirs and lay pipe-lines; if he wants freedom from pestilence, he must develop medical science; if he wants food, he must cultivate the soil; if he fears natural forces, like fire and water, he must devise his own protection, build dykes and form fire companies; if he would eliminate his woes, he must do it himself. The method of progress in humanistic religion is human effort, not divine intervention. Any dependence upon a supernatural power to do anything is disastrous to mankind. Man in his own strength must grapple with the forces of nature. Man in his own strength must face and solve his problems. Man in his own strength must work out his own salvation. There are no ministering angels, the good fairies are gone forever. Recognizing these facts the men who have accomplished things in this world have laid aside their theology and taken up science, and by means of science wonderful achievements have been attained. For instance, fifty years ago we knew practically nothing about the great plagues, but today science has wiped them out of existence; and scientific thought and earnest endeavor are rapidly accomplishing the things which men prayed for in vain for centuries.

Here is a tremendous alternative, and if we would be logical the choice must be made. There are logical theists who believe in a personal God who controls everything and who act accordingly, and there are logical humanists who place all their faith in the loyalty and ability of men and act accordingly; but the majority of liberals still stand in

the gap not daring to discard the one theory and lay hold of the other, but clinging to both in the hope that they may be reconciled. But this is absolutely impossible. Either one theory or the other is correct, and the sooner the liberal world makes this choice, the better it will be for liberal religion. So far as I am concerned I have made the choice. I believe that we are the actual creators of this world in which we live. Everything that makes this world different from the jungle has been accomplished by man. I am assured that we cannot depend upon an external supernatural force for guidance, but that we must depend upon ourselves. Besides, I am assured that we have no need for such a God, nay, that he is our enemy to the extent that men are led to depend upon him for the results which they should accomplish for themselves. Man has within himself the power to recreate the world and human life. So long as we pray to another this power is neglected. Until it is awakened there is no salvation.

We need, therefore, to preach as never before a faith in man, and his ability to make of this world what he will. The future lies wide open before us. We are no longer oppressed by having to do the will of another and superior being. We can choose what we will and do what we choose. We can mark out our own goal and take our own line to that goal. If all the people of this world should decide upon a certain kind of world and the way to attain it, there is no outside power that could prevent its accomplishment. This is a standpoint which must profoundly affect our whole attitude of mind. Its importance cannot be exaggerated. Think of it, men and women, we can make of this world what we will; and we are responsible for what we do make of it. In the light of the responsibility which rests upon us who make this decision, I feel that my most important work in this world is to help people make this decision in favor of humanism in order that their thoughts may be turned from the altars of the gods to the tasks which lie about them, for once we turn men's efforts from prayer and supplication to a firm and confident reliance upon themselves the future is assured.

Danger is greatest when things grow to equality, said Lord Bacon, meaning things social and political. Truly

we may apply his words to those conditions of our time which tend to create equality between revealed and natural religion, between the Bible as the word of God and the words of men, between theology and science, between Jesus as God and Jesus as man, between theism and humanism. The future depends upon the choice of these tremendous issues which shallow interpretations seek to neutralize and explain away. Most of the confusion of this modern time is due to those people who, unwilling to break entirely with the old and unable to comprehend entirely the new, make an attempt to fuse the two together. Let us think things through. Let us dare to be logical. There is great anxiety about the churches, but what is really needed is a faith built upon scientific truth. This will demand more than compromise, more than half-way liberalism.

The Vexing Problem of Censorship

FEW persons have any idea of the great battle that is being waged between those who advocate and those who oppose the censorship of literature and drama; neither have many people any conception of the importance of this struggle, of the principles involved, or of the possible consequences. For this desire to censor books, plays, magazines, scientific treatises and even ideas is growing and spreading in our country. It is a ripple today, it may be a wave tomorrow and engulf not only books that deal with sex, but also books that deal with all advanced scientific truths. We are confronted therefore not with a passing issue, but with a wide-spread demand and in this demand there is a principle at stake, which is of fundamental importance to the intellectual life and to the preservation of our free institutions. The trouble seems to be worldwide. Not long ago book stores in Hungary were raided by the authorities, and even Paris—and Paris certainly is not noted for being straightlaced—has suppressed a flood of indecent books and pamphlets. In fact, the same difficulty has presented itself in practically every world city. Even in Russia, though the censorship there is not concerned with sex problems, all books which affirm the existence of God are banned by the censors.

In this country there has been constant agitation against certain books, plays, magazines, resulting from time to time in legal action which took them off the market. A few years ago a number of plays such as *The Captive*, *The*

Virgin Man, and *Sex* were withdrawn from the stage in New York, while many others like *What Price Glory* were deleted before permitted to continue. In Boston the crusade seems to be directed against books, so that dozens of volumes such as *The Rebel Bird*, *The Hard-boiled Virgin*, *The Ancient Hunger*, *The Butcher Shop*, *The Well of Loneliness*, *Ulysses*, *Bad Girl*, and many others too numerous to mention have been banned. Of course Boston too is anxious about her drama, and a few weeks ago prevented the presentation of *Strange Interlude*, although it should be noted that Quincy, a separate borough within the Metropolitan district of Boston approved the play and there the people of Boston have opportunity to enjoy it. Even here in Minneapolis we have felt the touch of the censor. Two years ago all the magazine stands were raided to clear them of so-called pornographic literature. Last year the Gayety theater was closed; and this year *Strange Interlude* had to be read by the police and approved before its appearance.

The first step I could almost approve because the most despicable part of this whole business is in the magazine industry. Here there is no question of art or of freedom of speech, it is merely a question of literary garbage lying around on every street corner and in every drug store—absolutely disgusting stories written by dirty-minded people to get the dimes from boys and girls. I cannot refrain here from telling you of Mr. Van Loon's recommendation in regard to this type of literature. He is dreadfully opposed to censorship and also to this class of writing—you notice I do not say literature. He thinks that even here we do not need censors or police, but a little parental watchfulness and criticism. He tells us that he has a simple rule in his house and it is this: "My beloved sons, you can read any book you want, and you can go to any play you want, and if you will ask your father he will buy you any book you want; but if I ever find you with one of those vile little magazines I shall take you gently behind the barn and I shall lick Hades out of you." In regard to the Gayety, I think the closing of that was merely unfair discrimination. I have no desire to defend burlesque shows, but fundamentally there is no difference between the shows presented at the

Gayety and those presented at the Minnesota or the Metropolitan when one of these big revues comes. The difference is merely in the class of people to which they cater. Of course jokes must be made more obvious in the burlesque show because the actors are confronted by a more stupid group of people, but the same jokes in a little more subtle form are passed out over the footlights of the best theaters; and I believe that the people on Washington Avenue have just as much right to that kind of entertainment as the people on Ninth Street. In regard to *Strange Interlude*; well, I was greatly amused at the thought of two policemen passing on the value of a piece of dramatic art which had won the Pulitzer prize; and may it be said to their credit that they saw nothing objectionable in it. I saw *Strange Interlude* and I would not have missed it for the world. It was an entrancing piece of dramatic art. I grant you that it did not deal with the more refined and pleasant problems of human life, but why anyone should be shocked by it, I do not know. Perhaps I am pretty "hard-boiled," as the boys would say, but somehow I do not get shocked, at least by anything that is genuine; and this whole problem of sex has always been discussed in my family and with my children with the same freedom that any other subject is discussed. With the exception of that knowledge which can be gained only by experience, my children know everything about sex that I know. So a great deal of this everlasting flurry about sex is entirely foreign to my experience.

I

But I am getting away from my purpose. I want to discuss rather the fundamental principles underlying this problem of censorship. What I started out to show was that in this country the clouds have been slowly gathering, and some day the storm is going to break. Now the whole question upon its face appears to be a very simple one; but in reality it is very complicated and covers practically the entire field of human nature, precedent, tradition, law, and history. It involves all such questions as what is proper and what isn't; who is a genius and who isn't; who shall be the judge; how much does literature and drama, good

or bad, influence life; what does freedom of speech really mean; what would happen if censorship were extended into the fields of politics and religion? These questions and many more like them, rise to the surface at once in considering these matters. Censorship has always existed and always been denounced. Carried to its limits it ends in tyranny. On the other hand, physical acts have to be restrained. People in general have to be decent and orderly, else they will be punished. The censors claim the same law for mental acts. They say that thought precedes action and if a writer is allowed to publish anything he pleases, his improper writings may cause more damage than if he himself committed murder.

Of course censorship applies to every phase of human activity, but today we have in mind the censorship of books and plays, or literature in general. There are three channels through which writers reach the public—motion pictures, drama, and printed material of all kinds issued in books, periodicals and newspapers. So far as the motion pictures are concerned, their censorship is a separate history, characterized by general stupidity and ineffectiveness, resulting as most censorships do, in the elimination here and there of an offending sex scene, and permitting the wholesale production of the most stupid, offensive and crime provoking pictures that one could imagine. And this leads me to say that I cannot understand why the only thing that excites the censor's mind is the matter of sex. All morality seems to revolve around sex. Save the youth and the weak in the matter of sex and all is well. No matter how dangerous a "movie" may be in suggesting dishonesty, political corruption, graft, inciting the young minds to crime, so long as it does not offend sexually, it is all right. No one is more conscious of the importance of sex than I am, but I cannot understand why people get so wrought up about books and plays that deal with sex in a realistic way, when they are ready to swallow the most horrible things in every other realm of thought and morals. The other two channels which I mentioned are drama and literature and these may be considered together, as belonging to more permanent forms of art, for the reason that all plays of merit or that

have an unusual run, as a rule, are issued in printed form, and therefore become a part of literature. It is with these that we are dealing principally at present.

I think it is easy enough to understand how the present situation has arisen. Of course the problem of censorship has always been present. Every time anything new or different or unaccustomed has risen to the surface in literature as well as in other fields of thought, there has been the tendency to suppress it, so that this struggle between censorship and freedom has always been going on, and there never was a time when certain books and plays have not been suppressed, and usually those that have been considered pernicious at the time come to be known as commendable works at a later period. But the present tendency toward censorship has been due largely to the perversion of a valuable trend in literature and art and drama. For the past generation we have been swept along in a current of the realistic treatment of the problems of life, and especially those dealing with sex. This method first became evident in the drama of Ibsen, followed by such men as Sudermann in Germany and Shaw in England. No one questions the value of their work and method of interpretation in freeing the stage of the conventionalized sort of thing that was once so prevalent and dishonest. It meant the injection of new life and a realistic treatment into a medium which was gradually sinking into a sort of coma. It paved the way for daring new writers such as our own Sherwood Anderson in fiction and Eugene O'Neill in drama. These men are blazing new trails. They are doing work of so great importance that only time can tell its real value. It is daring and frank work, but it has undoubted merit and artistic structure. Had all the books and plays been of similar sincerity and quality I doubt if the question of censorship would ever have risen.

Unhappily not all by any means have been of this high excellence. Recently literature and drama have come under the influence of the sex theme. Now sex has always been a fair subject because of its universal interest; but many of the books and dramas of the present time upon this theme have been daring and upon phases of it that have ordinarily

been considered topics for the clinic rather than the stage. But such of these as have been genuinely honest and true have justified themselves and been approved. But the matter did not rest there. The universal tendency to imitate and exploit a thing came to the front. Let something succeed, and immediately there are thousands who imitate and exploit it. This is true of literature and the drama. Let there be one successful book or play upon any theme and there follow dozens on similar and allied themes. We have had waves of crime plays, of romantic plays, of domestic plays, of mystery plays, and of even religious plays. Thus in the train of the serious and artistic sex play there have followed other sex plays and these have been written neither with honesty of purpose nor artistic impulse. They have been written in many cases merely to pander to what is thought to be the public taste for the moment. Crude workmanship, vulgarity of dialogue, and scenes designed to shock characterize them, with the result that our novels, many of them, deal with sex philandering in a disgusting and salacious manner, while the theaters are filled with so-called bed-room dramas without any serious purpose except to please the dirty-minded and offend people of refinement. That there has been an over-emphasis of this sort of thing in certain quarters cannot be denied. And it is because of this and the fear that it may grow worse that many people are demanding the censorship of books and of plays. Now there is no doubt that this tendency should be overcome. The question is whether or not censorship on the part of individuals or public officials is the proper solution? In order to answer this, we must understand something of the principles underlying censorship, the method by which it is exercised, and the effectiveness of its practise.

II

Of course the greater part of the agitation against books and plays comes from a group of fanatic moralists, who with the Bible in one hand and a hammer in the other, and without any conception whatever of the real meaning of morality, go about trying to bring the world to their restricted point of view. With these I am in no way con-

cerned this morning. I have in mind rather that great mass of intelligent and respectable people, who feel that there is something "rotten in Denmark" and long for a clean and aesthetic expression of life's problems both in our books and on the stage; but who are unable to reach any conclusion as to a method of procedure, because as I have suggested in my title this matter of censorship is a vexing problem. It involves those two fundamental principles, which run counter to each other in every phase of our life—the principle of social control and that of individual freedom, both of which are absolutely sound, and must somehow be carefully balanced, if we would live together in harmony and at the same time preserve the rights of individuality. Let us look at these for a moment.

The first principle affirms that society has the right to exercise control over the institutions which serve its needs and foster its ideals. There is no question about this right in the complicated society which forms our environment. So long as men lived a more or less isolated existence, they could do what they desired without interference from society. The farmer's wife could throw her garbage into the road and it was nobody's business but her own. She could permit as much filth around the place as she desired and it endangered no one but the immediate family. In their isolated home these people could keep any animals they pleased, make as much noise as they pleased, practise any morals they pleased, and it was of no general concern. But the situation has changed. We are now herded together in great cities, in which much individual action effects and infringes the rights of other people, perhaps endangers their existence, and each must live according. We now dispose of garbage and sewage as the community directs, we build our houses according to certain specifications, we must practise such morals as do not offend our neighbors. We drive about according to traffic regulations and at the direction of police officers. And we all acquiesce to this tyranny because we know that under no other conditions can life in a crowded community be made safe or even tolerable.

It is this fact of social control which underlies the demand

for censorship of books and plays. These are thought of as public conveyances for the distribution of ideas, and therefore should be under the regulation of society as much as any other public conveyance. These people argue that the minds and morals of men and women must be protected as well as their bodies. If one should dump his garbage in the street, it might please the lovers of dumb animals because the stray dogs and cats would find sustenance; but such conduct would be immediately forbidden by the city authorities, on the ground that the public health is endangered by the presence of refuse in the streets. The same thing applies to the theater and to book shops. If a salacious play is exhibited in the theater there will always be a group of dirty-minded men and women to enjoy it and cry out in protest against interference; but there can be no toleration of the disease of the few at the expense of the health of the many. This is the argument of the people who believe in censorship. It is merely the attempt to carry the absolutely sound principle of social control over into the field of literature and art.

On the other hand there are those who contend that the drama and books should be left alone—no matter how bad the situation, it can only be made worse by outside interference. This argument is based on the great principle of personal liberty—that the mind of man in art as well as in science, can flourish and bear fruit, only as it lives in the soil and breathes the air of freedom. The moment you say to a man, that thus far shalt thou go and no farther, at that moment his genius begins to wither. And who is there competent, these advocates ask, of deciding for the great mass of people the questions of right and wrong. In this matter of everyday morality where can you find a permanent and universal standard of decency. There is a very recent book on this subject, entitled *To the Pure, a Study in Obscenity and the Censor* which devotes most of its contents to this phase of the subject, showing that there is such a wide difference of opinion as to the meaning of obscenity, that no standards of censorship, aside from the opinion of an individual, could possibly be determined. It shows also how our standards are constantly changing in this regard. In the

days of Queen Elizabeth people were shocked by bodily exposure. Every portion of the body had to be covered; but for these same people nothing was too vile in the spoken word. In other words they were shocked through the eye and not through the ear. Just the opposite situation seems to prevail today. We will stand anything in the way of nakedness, but are immediately excited when language becomes too free. And after all this is only a matter of custom, and has little to do with morality. I spent practically all the summer on the beach and watched young men and women, all of them seven-eighths naked, playing together just as innocently and harmlessly as if they were fully dressed. And then too you have every kind of people from the innocent school girl to the hardened men of the world—how are you going to make distinctions in a field of this kind? How can morals intrude upon aesthetics without damage to the latter? Literature and drama are forms of art, and art can live only in the atmosphere of freedom.

And if the censorship idea should prevail, what guarantee have we that it will not soon be extended into other fields, into the field of scientific investigation and religious adventure. In fact, we already have glaring examples of it in the former field in a number of our states which prevent the teaching of the theory of evolution in public schools, and in the latter field in the "Index Expurgatorius" of the catholic church and in the attempt to suppress atheistic societies by religious people in general. We also have examples of it in the economic and political fields where men are not allowed to express opinions contrary to those generally accepted. There is no doubting the fact that the censorship idea carried to its logical conclusions would mean the establishment of tyranny over the minds of men and the end of human progress.

III

Having presented these two underlying principles of censorship, both of which seem sound, I must give you my conclusions in the matter. I believe absolutely in the principle of social control and also in the principle of personal liberty; but I am unalterably opposed to the idea of

censorship as it is generally understood. I believe that the present situation in literature and the drama needs to be corrected. I believe also that society has a right to interfere and control the publication of books and the presentation of plays; but I do not believe that the censorship as an official institution is the wise and proper kind of social control to use in this case. I believe that we must resort to the democratic method of public opinion and not to the monarchical method of censorship.

In the first place, I am opposed to censorship because it is a substitution of a government of persons for a government of laws. It puts a single will above the common will. The very essence of democracy is the control of a community on the basis of a body of laws which express not what one person or a group of persons think, but what all the people think and desire together. In a monarchy government consists of the will of a single man; but in democracy it consists in a group of laws enacted to represent as nearly as possible the consensus of opinions in the community at large as to how certain situations are to be met. When a mayor or governor administers this law, he is supposed to act apart from his own personal ideas on the matter. Of course this is not always done, but this is the idea, and democracy is successful insofar as it can be carried out. When we fall subject to the will of a single man or a group of men, our liberty is lost and our democracy gone. Now a censorship in the very nature of the case represents the substitution of persons for law, the individual will for the will of the people. For instance, in England the theater is under the absolute control of the Lord Chamberlain, who rules entirely the field of drama. He is not bound by any laws or even precedents. His only standard of judgment is his own private opinion of what is right and wrong, decent and indecent, moral and immoral. When he approves or disapproves a play, there is no appeal from his decision. What the people shall see in the theater is determined absolutely by his will, and the mistakes he has made in the suppression of great drama and the approval of silly and salacious ones are appalling. This is what I mean by the substitution of persons for law, to which I am utterly op-

posed. Censorship may have its place in a monarchy or a papacy, but in a democracy it is an intolerable intrusion.

This leads to my second objection, namely; that censorship constitutes a denial to the creative mind of that liberty without which it must atrophy and die. If history teaches us anything, it surely teaches that the intellectual and artistic genius of mankind flourishes only as it breathes the air of freedom. The most brilliant period in human enlightenment is that which came to Athens in the fifth century B. C. The reasons for that marvellous development, I suppose, are various, but preeminent among them was that extraordinary atmosphere of liberty in which the intellects of Athens were born and passed their days. As their freedom declined so did their genius, until it disappeared altogether in the Dark Ages when the censorship of the Roman church over the thought and speech of men became absolute. If the Middle Ages are dark it is for no other reason than that the papacy forbade anybody to give expression to anything opposed to the theological dogmas of the time. Look at Roger Bacon and Copernicus, Bruno and Galileo, and what happened to them. There could be no progress so long as such a censorship was maintained. If man's intellectual life was to survive at all, it could be only through the destruction of such control. Deliverance came with the Renaissance, when the mind of man, freed from the intolerable tyranny, entered again on the search of knowledge. The record of the last three hundred years in science, philosophy, literature, music, drama, again is to be found in the principle of liberty. Think of what a censorship would have done to such men as Voltaire, Kant, Lessing, Goethe, Hugo, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Ruskin, Carlyle, to name only a few of the giants of the last two centuries. Censorship discourages initiative, kills inquiry, stops the spontaneous exercise of thought, and suppresses the proclamation of truth. It is for this reason that I am opposed to a censorship of books and plays.

Of course, it is true that many of these books and plays which should be suppressed are by no stretch of the imagination works of art. Many of them are merely a series of indecent episodes and vulgar jokes, and the suppression

of them would in no way destroy or hinder the work of the creative genius; but this brings me to my third objection to the censorship of books and plays. It may be simple enough to make distinction between products of art and genius and those of a diseased imagination, but what is the guarantee that the censorship can do that thing? So far as experience shows the censor does precisely the opposite. The English censorship is a perfect example of this. It is a well known fact that there is as much filth on the London stage as anywhere in the world, and yet I could read you a long list of dramatic masterpieces that have been excluded from production in recent years, such as Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Rostand's *La Samaritaine*, Brieux's *Maternite*, Maeterlinck's *Morna Vanna*, Barker's *Waste*, Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *O'Flaherty V. C.* The same thing is true in this country. New York destroyed *The God of Vengeance* and permitted *The Demi-Virgin*; while Boston banned *Strange Interlude* and listened to *Ladies' Night*. In this very matter of distinguishing between works of art and filthy trash every attempt at censorship has been a lamentable failure; probably because the censor is invariably a political officer and not a literary or art critic.

The same thing is true when it comes to distinguishing between the good and bad effects of a book or drama. How can an individual or a group of individuals estimate the effect of any book or play upon the minds of other people. I think there is only one criterion by which we could even approach such a standard, and this seems to be entirely ignored by every attempt at censorship. The criterion I have in mind is this—as to whether or not the book or play will inspire overt acts of evil in those who read and see them. A play or book about crime is not immoral or dangerous unless it inspires its readers to go and do likewise. By the same token a sex play or book is not immoral or dangerous unless it inspires sex desire in its audience. A few years ago the New York Police suppressed *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by Shaw, while letting a dozen of the undressed musical comedies play out their runs. Now on the criterion I have suggested, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was not only harmless but taught a great lesson and would no doubt

prevent many a girl from entering the ranks of prostitution; while the musical comedies with their nude forms and suggestive dances presented two hours of intense sex stimulation. The history of censorship shows a monotonous repetition of this blundering policy. Eugene Walter's masterly drama, *The Easiest Way*, carried a tremendous lesson, and while I cannot prove it, I cannot doubt that it prevented many a wavering young woman from taking the easiest way. But in moral Boston the play was closed by the same mayor who allowed *The Moulin Rouge* to keep on running merrily to big business. And a few weeks ago the Boston police ran true to form by banning *Strange Interlude*, a dignified piece of work by a master of the theater which contains not a single line tempting the auditor to go and do likewise, while permitting many undoubtedly salacious plays to continue.

The same thing is true of books, many of which have been banned because they deal seriously and frankly with the most important problems of life, while silly, sentimental, and foolish books pass unnoticed. I fear much less for the future of our young people who have access to the great free, frank, vitalizing book which deals with fundamental impulses, the primal passions and the amazing mysteries of human life than with those superficial, sentimental, goody-goody books which are untrue to all the deeper experiences of life and out of line with the great tragic force of the world. *The American Tragedy* is a far better book for the morals of youth than all the Pollyanna books ever written. There is much truth in the conclusion reached by the authors of *To the Pure*, though touched with irony. They say "When a book is haled before the bar of justice, its author should not be condemned upon unverified hypotheses. His guilt should not be presumed. It will be time enough to invoke the majesty of the law when actual witnesses whom the book has debauched come weeping into court and cry for punishment on their seducers." If reading bad books make people bad, then Mr. Sumner, the head of the Anti-Vice Commission, should be the worst man in the world, for he reads more of them than anyone else. They do not effect him, why is he so fearful of their effect upon others?

IV

But I must return to my fundamental argument and hasten on to a conclusion. You will understand from what I have already said that I oppose any kind of an official censorship, not because I do not recognize that our literature and drama contain dangerous and poisonous elements; but because I believe there is more danger to progress from the censor than there is from the poison he would detect and destroy. This poison may destroy some, but the suppression of liberty would eventually destroy all. The censor, sealing up a spring of what he thinks is poison, is liable to seal up a spring of truth, and only as the truth is made free can men know freedom. And without freedom all democratic institutions will perish. If the people of a democracy cannot themselves avoid the obvious signs of poison in books and plays and pictures, I fear that they cannot choose a censor who is able to do this.

At the same time I believe absolutely in the principle of social control, but I believe that this social control must be exercised in a truly democratic manner, that it must be based upon the firm support of public opinion. The control must come from the bottom up and not from the top down. It must be the people themselves acting and not some individual or individuals who think themselves better than the people. I think, therefore, that the remedy for the present situation lies in educating the public to take a firm and definite line of action. Any man or woman who reads a book which he thinks is detrimental to public morals, should write to the publisher and let him know in no uncertain terms what he thinks of it and under what conditions he will continue to buy books published by that firm. Any man or woman who sees in a theater a presentation which seems to him unfit for production, should get up and walk out; and he should let the management know exactly why he is leaving, and on what terms and what reassurance he will come back again. One ounce of this kind of thing is worth a whole bushel of censorship or legislation. What we need is the assertion of the individual's own moral sense, and his determination that he will not tolerate or be a party to anything he believes to be vulgar and indecent.

This kind of control is effective because it strikes straight at the point where the publishers and theater managers are most vulnerable—in the exchequer. I do not mean to say that these men are not interested in art; but I know that their most vulnerable spot is the box-office, because regardless of any interest in art, a theater to keep its doors open must show a profit. Let a publisher see the prospect of a hundred thousand edition or the manager a long run of full houses and they will publish or present anything the law allows; but show them the prospect of a failure and depleted treasury and they will be smitten with a more intense horror of anything that is objectionable than any censor would be. You will find that after a half dozen publishers and producers have been thus discouraged, there will be no need for a censor. Perhaps you object that the people cannot thus be depended upon, but I feel that they can. The great bulk of the people want clean books and plays, and will support only that kind. The indecent books have not been those that run into extra editions. There are enough dirty minded people in the country to make their publication possible, but all the books that sell in large volume are books of merit and value. The same is true of the theater. The dirty shows do not run very long. There are enough moral lepers in any town to keep them on the boards for a short time, but they are never great or permanent successes. The plays which have run for years and made their millions have invariably been wholesome. Think of the great successes—*Rip Van Winkle*, *The Old Homestead*, *Shore Acres*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Way Down East*, *The Lion and the Mouse*, *The Music Master*, *Turn to the Right*, *Lightnin'*, *Abie's Irish Rose*. Such plays may not mean much from the standpoint of art, but they mean a great deal from the standpoint of decency. The public at bottom are clean minded and they will buy clean books and support clean plays; and thus it is public sentiment which will save us in the end.

This public sentiment might be supported by a certain kind of leadership. A few years ago there was much talk about a public jury consisting of three hundred members, who should determine which plays should be permitted.

Of course, this is an improvement over an individual censor, but still a censorship. I do believe, however, that a jury of competent people, composed of artists and dramatists, literary and dramatic critics, producers and publishers, as well as common ordinary people might be selected, not to censor books and plays, but to recommend and condemn books and plays, and thus guide the unenlightened public. In other words, there should be some medium through which the public may get a fair and honest and intelligent estimate of a book and play before they lend it their support. This would be entirely in line with our principles of democracy and education. Educate the people and then let them make their own choices. This is democracy in its finest form; and this I believe is the ultimate social control on which we as a democratic people must depend in our attempt to keep our literature and our drama clean. It is public sentiment which will save us in the end. The main thing is to keep the public mind free to express itself, and use every means to make that expression intelligent and clean. Our books and theaters must be controlled by public opinion—public opinion intelligently directed in wholesome channels.

This whole problem was summed up by Thomas Jefferson in his first inaugural, although referring to a different matter. He said: "If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it." This is the true creed of liberty of opinion and expression. The vice of censorship is that reason is not left free to combat error. The foundation of democracy is the faith that in such a combat reason and right will prevail. And the last word in favor of free and unlicensed printing was spoken by John Milton, who said: "Truth is a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition." This is the picture we need always to keep in mind. If we build dams the waters of life become stagnant, and in time polluted by their own corruption. Our business is to let them flow freely. Then, though poisons are poured into the stream, the water will keep clean, for flowing water purifies itself.

The Twilight of Christianity

THE popular religion of western civilization is today facing the most serious crisis of its entire history. Time and time again Christianity has been placed before the bar of human reason and subjected to a rigid scrutiny. It has been examined and tested and indicted and pronounced a failure by scholars here and there during the whole period of its regime. It has been attacked ethically because in all its long history it has failed to produce better individual characters or an improved social condition. It has been attacked philosophically because its theology does not fit in with the best philosophical thinking of the age. It has been attacked historically because of the uncertainty of its historical foundations. It has been attacked scientifically because its doctrines outrage the results of scientific investigation. It has been undermined by the study of comparative religions because its doctrines and ceremonies seem to be nothing but a sublimated form of the superstitions of primitive man. But today there is a concerted attack from these various points of view, which would indicate that Christianity is in the last stages of a long decline, and sooner or later will pass from the scene of human history. This thought is suggested by the title of the book I am to review this morning "The Twilight of Christianity," by Harry Elmer Barnes—the most fundamental and devastating indictment which has yet been launched against the established religion.

You all know Professor Barnes? He spoke before our Laymen's League two years ago on the causes of the war, a subject to which he has given an unusual amount of re-

search, and is recognized everywhere as an authority on this matter. He is the professor of historical sociology in Smith College. He is one of the outstanding educators of America. He is an unusually dynamic personality, and when he becomes interested in a problem he devotes all his brilliance and energy to its solution. His books on sociology and history have attained an international reputation, and he is recognized as one of the foremost intellectual leaders in the world today. His interest in religion was aroused by his contact with this society through reading its printed addresses. For many years, although he had been brought up in a rigidly orthodox family, he had discarded religion entirely as a matter of no personal interest, and studied it merely as a factor in human development in his historical and sociological researches. But recently he began to feel the vital importance of religion as a social factor—the dangers connected with a dogmatic and supernatural religion and the possibilities involved in a secular and humanistic religion. In fact, he says “It is the thesis of the writer that the orthodox religious complex is . . . the most active and pervasive menace to civilization which confronts mankind today, compared with which war and poverty are unimportant incidental details.” It is because of the stimulation received from contact with our work, and I hope I speak without conceit, that he dedicated the book to me and makes considerable use of my material in developing his argument. He writes me thus: “I have long regarded you as the unchallenged leader of progressive religious thought in the United States; and such inadequate reference as I have made to your work is a very slight reciprocation for the splendid aid and encouragement which I have received from your printed sermons.” And a letter received from him yesterday says, “I am sure that at the best my writings on religion are no more than a faint echo of your much more learned and profound sermons. If I can be the vehicle for giving your work wider dissemination, I shall rest quite contented.” While such remarks are very flattering, this book has no resemblance of an echo, much less an echo of anything that I may have said. It contains a wealth of knowledge and a method of attack, which greatly overshadows my feeble efforts. Nevertheless I appreciate

beyond words, no matter how undeserved, this gracious tribute.

Professor Barnes first engaged actively in the religious field, when last January he delivered an address before the historical branch of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the general trend of which was that mankind needs a new concept of God. This lecture provoked nation-wide controversy, and brought forth a rebuke from Professor Osborn, the president of the Association, who blamed Professor Barnes for injecting religious controversy into a purely scientific conference. Professor Barnes felt that the time had come when historical science should turn its instruments of investigation upon the prevailing religion. This address was followed by a full page article in the *Sunday New York Times* giving the public the content of this address. His campaign was then continued by articles and debates in well-known magazines, such as the *Forum*, *Current History*, *The Scientific Monthly*, and others, and now Professor Barnes has given us a thorough analysis of the whole subject in his new book. And what a book! With his tremendous knowledge of contemporary thought and literature, he has mobilized all the factors that make for the demolition of Christianity. It is a devastating indictment of the Christian religion, ethically, historically, philosophically, scientifically. He analyses the whole religious problem as few men are capable of doing, and hurls his unanswerable arguments like a thunderbolt against a decaying institution, which had already been honeycombed by the washing tides of modern thought; and when it strikes with the terrific force of its scholarship and logic it will shatter the whole structure for men of discerning mind.

This book should have a tremendous influence upon the religious thought of the future. There may be books that were more carefully written. It has already been charged that the book was written too hastily, but I have not been able to find any important mistakes in it. I think these people have in mind principally the arrangement of material and the rounding out of phrases. In this respect I think it could have been improved, but Professor Barnes writes as he speaks, in one continuous flow of enthusiastic and dynamic

language. He is more interested in getting the thing said than in how it is said. It is a polemic and not an essay, interested in the unassailable argument and not the polished phrase. And while some will try to throw a smoke screen over this book by saying it has been hastily written, and thus try to give the impression that it is not authoritative; I should like to say that this book carries in it a challenge to the Christian religion which its leaders dare not ignore without admitting defeat. It is a complete and authoritative analysis of the whole religious controversy. Every important phase of the situation has been exhaustively examined and carefully analyzed. It is amazing the amount of erudition which he has brought to bear upon the subject, and the book is a lasting monument to the cultural background, scientific training, and moral courage of its author. If this book does not blast the "Rock of Ages," then surely that rock must be impregnable.

I trust that you do not gather from what I have said that Professor Barnes writes with rancor. Just because it is a terrible indictment of the popular religion does not mean that he maliciously attacks what people consider sacred. The indictment lies in the fact that he removes the foundation from the structure and watches it tumble. In fact, the book is written in fine spirit with the express purpose of examining the main tenets of the contemporary religion in the light of modern knowledge. Indeed the book may be regarded as a friendly critique of religion, because, as the author suggests, even though it undermines the sacred tenets of our contemporaries, the ultimate result will be favorable to the construction of a religion really suitable to a twentieth century civilization.

I

My purpose this morning is to give you an idea of the contents of this book, and so I shall very briefly and very inadequately outline the arrangement of his material and the arguments he presents, hoping that it will inspire you to read the book and if possible to own it, because it contains all the material which people with our point of view should have accessible at all times.

The first chapter is entitled "Cultural Contrasts," in which is pointed out the discrepancy between science, technology and industry on the one hand and our opinions and institutions on the other; how our material culture is based on scientific ground while our thinking is largely still pre-scientific. This is discussed first from the standpoint of natural science with its application to human understanding and social problems—the tremendous expansion of space in the field of astronomy and the modern conception of existence in the realm of physics and chemistry, as well as the tremendous extension of time and the changed conception of life in the fields of geology and biology. It deals also with the social sciences, such as psychology which has given us a purely naturalistic understanding of the problems of human behavior and has thoroughly undermined the older version of conduct; and sociology which reveals in a purely naturalistic manner the origin and growth of our institutions as well as the evolution of human ideas and conceptions which underlie those institutions. At the same time our opinions and institutions have altered but slightly, the intellectual outlook of the masses remaining much the same as it was in primitive times. Our law is founded upon ancient theories and practices; our attitude and usages with respect to property are equally full of primitive vestiges. We have been especially reluctant to bring the control of sex and the family into harmony with contemporary scientific and aesthetic considerations. Our educational system has by no means kept pace with the vast alteration of our ways of living. Journalism has not adapted itself to the new type of life, so as to provide educational direction to the problems of modern living. But above all religion is entirely out of step with modern developments in knowledge and life.

While there have been religious revolutions in the past, none of them are comparable to the present situation. Those were mere changes in religious forms, today the situation is very different. We are now in possession of a body of knowledge and a resulting set of intellectual and social attitudes which offer a complete challenge to contemporary religion. Modern science renders the whole set of assumptions underlying the accepted religion absolutely archaic

and preposterous; and if we are to understand the nature of the present religious revolution and its far reaching effect upon our mental and social life, the problem must be approached with intellectual candor and courage. Professor Barnes then proclaims his right to discuss the religious problem. Hitherto such discussion was supposed to rest with the theologians because religion was regarded as a unique phase of human experience due to the influence of the spirit world; but now it has been thoroughly demonstrated that religion is a purely human product, an aspect of human behavior. This being the case then religion can be intelligently studied only by the representatives of the various techniques competent to analyze human behavior, namely: students of psychology, anthropology, history, sociology and the other social sciences. This part of the book is intended to answer those theologians, who tell Professor Barnes that he would be much wiser if he stuck to his field of sociology and left religion to those who are competent to understand it.

If any of you have grown somewhat indifferent toward the religious problem as presented from this platform you surely ought to read the next chapter entitled "What Price Religion." The author tells us that many of his friends have told him that they could understand his having risked criticism and popular disapproval by revealing the causes of the war, which was a worthy cause, but they cannot understand his taking even greater risk in dealing with the relatively unimportant matter of religious emancipation. But important as the problem of war guilt and universal peace may be, he regards the religious problem as infinitely more important, because it colors and determines to a large extent the thinking which people bring to bear upon all other problems, and insists that there is little hope of settling the other problems satisfactorily until the people have been relieved of their orthodox religious complex. He then devotes sixty pages to revealing how great are the evils which religion is able to accomplish. He passes over all the pain and sacrifice which lie in the religious train of the past, and deals with contemporary influences. First, in the intellectual world by the mental attitudes which it engenders, leading men to place dependence on outside forces instead of trusting in their

own abilities and resources; the feelings of inferiority and guilt which it spreads; the creation of reactions opposed to intellectual freedom and open-mindedness; the inhibitions which it places upon the mental attitudes which are necessary to meet the daily tasks and opportunities of this life; and the gloom which it spreads by reason of its holy days and sacrificial aspects, having a stultifying and paralyzing influence upon the intellectual life.

Then he turns to politics and law and shows the many ways in which traditional religion obstructs the most intelligent and efficient approach to the state and political problems, especially with its reverential attitude toward the state which is a carry-over from the doctrine of divine right; and the injection into political affairs of religious prejudices and partisanship. In law this reverential attitude not only prevails, but our statute books are clogged with laws which involve offenses, not in any sense anti-social, but purely religious; while the religious point of view has led to a doctrine of criminal responsibility and the treatment of criminals which obstructs progress toward any rational method of dealing with the crime problem. He shows also the pernicious influence religion has had upon our economic problems and business affairs, and journalism and art, and education, restricting them in such manner as to prevent a frank and intelligent attitude toward life. Especially has it been a menace to a sane attitude toward sex, treating sex as a necessary evil and leaving in its train all the maladjustments which have been degrading and demoralizing to both men and women. And finally he points out that all the statistic inquiries of recent years discredit the conventional notion that orthodoxy promotes such desirable moral traits as honesty, reliability, and unselfishness. In fact, an elaborate test on three thousand children showed definitely that the tendency to lie, cheat and the like was in direct proportion to their knowledge of the Bible and religious precepts.

I need not spend much time on the next chapter which deals with the origin of religion, entitled "How Mankind Got Religion." It traces the evolution of religion in much the same way as I did in the published address *How the Gods were Made*, and shows that the Christian epic with

all of its ramifications is but an elaboration and sublimation of the superstitious fears of primitive man in the presence of unknown forces, which he personalized and attempted to appease by means of offerings and sacrifices and prayers. The next chapter can also be passed hurriedly. It deals with the Bible, and after a careful review of the history and results of biblical criticism, comes to the conclusion, which you have been taught, that the Bible is of course significant as providing the outlines of the religious philosophy and history of the Jews and early Christians, but of little value to the modern world except as a source for such study. There is no reason for taking the biblical views on religion any more seriously than we do the religious beliefs embodied in the other contemporary cults of the Orient, no reason for accepting its history as any more accurate than the exaggerated writings of the secular historians of that period, and no more reason for believing its science than the scientific writings of Pliny the Elder. Today we read the Persian scriptures, the history of Heroditus and Pliny's *Natural History* out of historical curiosity, and we should approach the chapters of Genesis with the same attitude of mind. Of course the author points out the outrage which has been perpetrated upon mankind by making it the word of God and forcing human life to conform itself to this ancient and fixed standard. He submits the Ten Commandments to a searching scrutiny and shows that they are entirely unfitted and inadequate as an ethical code or as a means of social control in this modern time.

The next chapter, entitled "The Faith of Our Fathers Living Still" is an outline of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian church, summarizing the essentials of the Christian attitude toward the physical universe, God, man, and the good life, as held by religious persons, not only of the past, but even in twentieth century America. He shows their cosmology to be a purely geocentric one in which the earth is believed to be of peculiar significance in the universe. Along with this geocentric interpretation of the universe naturally goes a crude and literal anthromorphic view of God, which he describes with considerable detail. The orthodox notions of the purpose of life and of the nature

of virtue flow naturally from this same cosmology. Life here on this planet is of little consequence. It is significant only insofar as it affects our eternal destiny; and the source of guidance for human life is to be found not in the sciences of nature and of man, but in the Bible, which is supposed to reveal God's wishes and directions with respect to that life which merits divine approval and will achieve eternal salvation. This chapter also deals with the doctrine of free will and the existence of the soul, especially with regard to its supposed survival after death and the places where it will reside—heaven and hell. Professor Barnes recognizes that while the Fundamentalists would accept this as a true statement of Christianity the Modernists would resent the identification of Christianity with these orthodox doctrines; but he shows very conclusively that the orthodox Christians infinitely outnumber those who accept the liberal interpretation of the Christian epic, and that even the liberals when driven to bay, fall back upon the old statements of faith, however allegorically they may interpret them; so that he is not setting up a man of straw and unaware of religious developments as some would accuse.

II

In the next chapter entitled "Blasting at the Rock of Ages," the author shows how this whole scheme is demolished by the proven facts of science. Astronomy has given us an altogether different picture of the physical universe, reducing the earth from its place of importance to one of insignificance, and showing that instead of being divinely created as a home for man it originated billions of years ago probably as the result of a trivial cosmic accident. Geology has presented us with a scientific conception of the evolution of earth's structure entirely out of line with the Christian conception. Biology has elucidated the principles of evolution and traces for us the development of organic life, thus upsetting the doctrine of perfect creation of living matter. Physiology and chemistry have made clear the enormous complexity of the processes of life, out of line with the simple theological interpretation. Physics has destroyed the old theory of causation and upset entirely the old idea of God based on causality, law, and order.

Psychology has provided a naturalistic explanation of human behavior and completely discredits the hypothesis of a soul and arbitrary free will. Anthropology has traced the evolution of human types and cultures in contradiction to the orthodox theory of their development. History has given us a secularized story of the growth of religious systems and beliefs, destroying the hypothesis of divine revelation or the unique validity of religion. The social sciences have indicated the nature and development of morality and institutions, thus providing a realistic secular explanation of what had been assigned to supernatural instigation. Finally, critical scholarship has discredited forever the orthodox view of the Bible as the inspired word of God.

It is a fascinating story that we read in this chapter, as the author unfolds the staggering conceptions of the universe and of human life revealed by the various branches of modern science; and not only does the orthodox view melt away like an iceberg in a tropic sea, but it becomes preposterous and childish, and one wonders how any man acquainted with these facts and in his right senses can continue to accept it. Not only does the author show conclusively that the modern picture of the universe wipes out the biblical notions of God, but he points out how difficult it is to form any conception of God at all; and how useless it is, because the real problem of man is not to adjust himself to the cosmos—a meaningless proposition—but rather to adjust himself to his physical environment, material culture, and his fellow men. This chapter is particularly interesting in its treatment of morality. Having this new conception of man as a highly developed animal, living temporarily upon an insignificant planet, the whole idea of morality changes. The type of behavior and institutions best suited to advance the happiness of such a creature are entirely different from those designed to help a specially created angel who had fallen and needed to be redeemed that he might again claim his sonship to God. Guidance to the achievement of the good life must be sought in the sciences of nature and of man and not in supernatural revelation or theological dogmas. If we would know what is good for physical man we must turn, not to the Bible, but

to physiology and biology, which indicate the processes and requirements of his physical nature. We must study psychology and psychiatry to comprehend the processes involved in man's behavior. The social sciences must be appealed to in order to understand the nature of the social institutions that condition the individual behavior. And so on and so on. There is practically no end to the new and inspiring conceptions, suggested in this chapter. It goes on to deal with the soul and free will and sin and spiritual life and death.

I pass the next chapter hastily because it deals with the conflict between science and religion, with which you are all more or less familiar. It is a fine analysis of the controversy and shows that many religious liberals, who accept the outstanding discoveries of the physical and biological sciences maintain an attitude toward religion which is as incompatible with the social sciences as the theology of the Fundamentalists. It is here that he makes a distinction between Devout Modernists and Advanced Modernists. Among the former he classes the liberal orthodox such as William Adams Brown, Henry N. Wieman, and Harry Emerson Fosdick and among the latter the Unitarian Humanists and some advanced Jewish Rabbis. The former are still trying to read scientific meanings into theological formulas, while the latter have accepted the scientific point of view. He says that your minister teaches a conception of religion which no reasonable scientist could criticise, and quotes several pages to prove this statement.

The next chapter has to do with what he calls the "Jesus Stereotype." He says the Jesus question is by all odds the most important phase of modern religious controversy, because Christianity stands or falls on the uniqueness of Jesus as a religious teacher, to which all except a few of the advanced Unitarian Humanists cling as tenaciously as any Fundamentalists. He treats this subject from two important angles. First he deals with the historicity of Jesus, showing how the actual knowledge which we possess about Jesus is practically nil, and that all the lives of Jesus from Renan down to Bruce Barton are but products of the imagination, idealized portraits, unconscious portrayals of the personality

and aspirations of the authors rather than of the character of Jesus. Next he deals with the ministry of Jesus in modern perspective, showing quite conclusively the inadequacy of his ethics for this modern time. How could this young Jewish peasant living in a remote corner of the world in primitive times comprehend and give rules of conduct for this complex industrial civilization of the twentieth century? After examining candidly the actual teachings of Jesus, insofar as we know them, he concludes that they are not only archaic, but even destructive of any advanced civilization. How then is it possible that so many comparatively advanced thinkers still cling to the uniqueness of Jesus person and the authority of his teaching? He explains it by what Walter Lipmann calls "stereotype thinking." In this connection the word "stereotype" means a mental image of a person or thing which we substitute for the reality. We are told about a person or thing before we see it; and those preconceptions govern deeply our whole process of thinking. We retain this stereotype unless we are forced by some unusual circumstance to abandon the old imagery and approach the matter in a direct and realistic manner, thus making our view of it approximate the actuality. Now most of our thinking is done in terms of these stereotypes, and this is especially true of religious thinkers in relation to Jesus. These men have a mental image of Jesus which was deeply impressed upon them in their childhood, and all their thinking in regard to him is controlled by this image rather than by the facts. He gives many illustrations from the teachings of these Devout Modernists, as for instance, in regard to Kirby Page, an outstanding opponent of war and militarism. Perhaps no one knows more about the problems of peace than Mr. Page, or has done more work in its promotion; and yet Mr. Page founds his pacifist program on the alleged teachings of Jesus, which in this field are unusually fragmentary and contradictory. If Mr. Page were able to divest himself of the Jesus stereotype, he would realize that he himself and dozens of others can offer more reliable information on questions of war and peace in one hour than the most industrious student could discover in the entire Bible. And thus does our author seek to break through the Jesus stereotype to the actual person, if there

was such a person, and recognize the meagerness and the unauthoritativeness of the knowledge we have about him and his teachings. And here, as I have frequently shown you, with the destruction of the uniqueness of Jesus teaching, comes the end of Christianity.

Well, what would Prof. Barnes put in its place? He answers this question in the final chapter called "Religion in a Secular Age." Many scientists hold that in the future there will be no need of religion, that science will be able to supply all the insight and controls essential to human beings. That may be true, but the writer concedes that a secularized social religion like Unitarian Humanism may be of great value in the future in organizing group sentiment in support of decent and just causes. He believes that man's emotions as well as his intellect should be used in the service of social control, and religion is better adapted to performing this function than science. The main thing to emphasize, however, is that the new religion will not itself attempt to supply the information and guidance essential to human happiness, but will derive this knowledge from the best science and aesthetics of the age. He then tells us what religion must abandon if it would command the respect and enlist the interests of those who actually live, intellectually speaking, in the twentieth century. He enumerates a number of things such as the idea of God, the uniqueness of Jesus, considerations of the infinite and the absolute, all idealistic philosophies which attempt to establish truths and values independent of human factors and situations, all assumptions of a supernatural world beyond the scope and methods of science; and the outstanding "theological fossils" such as the conceptions of the soul, immortality, sin, the spirit world, prayer, and the sense of sanctity and the sacred. He speaks also of the many functions which the church and the ministry must surrender to more potent agencies. He does not attempt to lay down in detail the essentials of a practicable religion, because his task has been to clear the ground so that a rational and serviceable religion can be formulated and applied. Here I must quote what should be of interest to you: "If anyone is, however, seriously interested in the opinions of the writer in this field, he would say that he believes that Unitarian Humanism will

serve admirably as the basis for the religion of the future. In expressing himself in this manner the writer must disclaim any intention whatever of serving as a propagandist for the specific religious development which has been the outgrowth of the activities of Dr. Dietrich and others who share these same views. It simply appears to the writer to be beyond all comparison, the most sincere, intelligent, consistent, and promising effort thus far achieved in the way of harmonizing an earnest religious impulse with the outstanding facts and attitudes produced by modern knowledge." Then he reproduces the essential principles of Humanism as set forth in one of my published addresses, with which, of course, you are all familiar.

III

I am very interested to see how the defendants of Christianity will answer this book. Of course, only the more ignorant and daring will have the courage to reply. The intelligent clergy know that Professor Barnes has all the facts on his side. And we can anticipate the replies by the recent attempts of certain ministers to meet the author in public debates. Their defense, of course, has been the age-long cry that the book is purely destructive. If Professor Barnes would destroy religion, what will he put in its place, as if when a man told you that a certain coin which you possess was counterfeit he was obliged to give you a good coin in its place. He has no right, says a minister, to dismiss Christianity with an ironic gesture. But Professor Barnes does put something in its place. He suggests that we all get acquainted with Humanism which meets man's religious needs as well as satisfies his intelligence. Another says that Professor Barnes may have a clear intellect, but he is lacking in emotion, and because of this lack treats what is real and sacred to others as illusion; and that "what we need is not to do away with our present conception of God and religion, but to experience them more fully; and this experience cannot come through intellectual analysis of the God-idea, but rather through an active whole-hearted, self-sacrificing co-operation with Him in carrying out his purposes in the world." But, let me ask, how can we co-operate in carrying out His purposes unless we know what

those purposes are; and who in this expanded universe and maze of human life has the temerity to pronounce what God's purposes are? Still another suggests that the author has attempted to sharpen his intellect in order to quiet his conscience, that his defense of birth control, his desire for freer divorce, his abolition of sin, and his real objection to the Christian God are not scientific at all, but principally moral. What he really wants is an easy going God who will not care whether a man commits moral and spiritual suicide by choosing the lower life of self-indulgence when he ought to prefer the higher life of fellowship with the creator. Need I say that none of these touch the validity of the author's arguments. They are merely rationalizations and defense mechanisms manufactured to confuse the issue. To my mind the author's position is invulnerable and his arguments unanswerable.

At the end let me say that Professor Barnes is not opposed to religion. He makes this perfectly plain. He is opposed only to a religion that is built upon the insecure foundation of scientific and historical error. He believes that if humanity and civilization are to be saved, we must have collaboration between science and a dynamic religion. He says we shall certainly require some form of social control beyond the appeal to pure intelligence. Many people are more sensitive to aesthetic considerations than to matters of cold fact. So he advocates a religion which can appeal to human emotions and enlist them in support of all human values. But such a religion must obtain its factual guidance from science—natural and social; and it would aid science in the application of such facts. In short, the new religion, if sound and practicable, must rest upon a thoroughly secular basis, must secure its facts from science, and must conceive its ideals in terms of the enrichment of life here and now.

Religion must abandon its hopeless efforts to adapt ancient categories and concepts to new knowledge of entirely different nature and meaning. Rather it must base its reconstruction upon the facts of the cosmos, of the world, and of man as we now know them, and then determine what valid religious concepts and practises can be worked out in

harmony with the new knowledge and perspective. In short, the future of religion depends upon making it harmonize with reality. There can be no good religion based upon bad—that is, unreliable or misleading—foundations. For this reason it behooves all honest and informed friends of religion to construct the framework of their religion upon a tenable substructure. The author believes that this cannot be effectively done by gradually surrendering one thing after another, deserting one sinking craft for another that is floundering also; but to go the whole way in an honest, logical, and courageous fashion and then calmly and intelligently see just what can be done about it when religion plants its feet solidly upon the rock of historical and scientific facts. If religion cannot be saved by squaring it with truth, then indeed its future is precarious.

In surveying the whole field of religion and its attempted reconstruction, it is Professor Barnes' opinion that the best and most successful attempt at this thorough-going reconstruction is being made by the Unitarian Humanists, and that the most effective of these in organized form is to be found in Minneapolis. May we so continue our work as to fulfill the prophecy and hopes of the author.

Thankful---for What and to Whom?

WE are approaching once more the annual festival of Thanksgiving. It is a long time since I have spoken on any phase of this subject, so I have announced for to-day the subject—"Thankful—for What and to Whom?" This festival occupies a special place among the six national festivals observed in this country. It is often spoken of as a uniquely American festival, since no other country has its exact equivalent. As a matter of fact, it bears the familiar marks of the ancient harvest festival; but it has the larger scope suggested by its new name. It was instituted by the Pilgrim Fathers to render thanks, not only for the bounties of nature, such as they were, in that first hard year of their life on this continent, but for all God's dealings with them and their cause—in the words of the book of common prayer, for their "creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life."

I always approach this festival with mingled feelings of gladness and regret—gladness that it spreads so much joy among men and regret that it suggests an irrational attitude toward the benefits of human life; gladness that the customs which it has gathered about it, and which are no part of the original idea, promote a better feeling among men, and regret that it should perpetuate a superstition which is entirely discredited by modern thought. So Thanksgiving Day does two things to me—it touches my emotion and it offends my reason.

When I hark back to the origin of the custom and picture our Pilgrim forefathers at their feast, with the friendly Indians all about, I feel a patriotic thrill. When I recall the Thanksgiving Days of my boyhood, I smell again the delicious odor of roast turkey and mince pie, of frying doughnuts and cinnamon rolls; and I see the busy kitchen in which my beloved mother took such delight, as mothers do, in tempting and appeasing the appetites of her boys. I remember with joy the family reunions of those rugged countrymen and the jovial rivalries of men of mighty appetite. I recall also the games and contests in which both the old and young men in the community took part after the disposition of the bountiful dinner, while again the mothers, as mothers always do, busied themselves over a sink full of soiled dishes. And I shall never forget the Thanksgiving evenings spent in the country church where the children of the Sunday School vied with each other in declamation and song—all centered about the idea of gratitude to a God in whom they really believed.

I remember, too, the frolics of later days associated with this season. When I was in college the big football game of the year fell on this day, and I shall never forget the efforts made to preserve the tradition that up to that time, thirty and more years ago, my college had never been defeated on Thanksgiving Day. Then, too, this was made a special feature in my fraternity. All the boys had their best girls from the old home town come on for several days' celebration, which included an open house, a card party, a theater party, a Tally-Ho party to the football game, and that evening the big fraternity dance of the year. Those indeed were the good old days, when with no cares, no fears, no serious thoughts whatever beyond the thoughts of love and college loyalty, we lived in a state of ecstasy.

All of us who have grown up in America have memories like these, which we cannot readily forget; and while customs have changed there is still a peculiar significance to this season of the year. I await Thanksgiving Day this year with some of the old anticipation. I have a small boy away at school, and he returns for the Thanksgiving season; and we are all living in the height of expectancy. We are going to have him home again, we are all planning

things for his delight during this short stay. His mother, again as mothers always do, has already arranged all the menus with the things he especially likes, and think of the joy in our household when the youngster arrives. It is worth having a boy away from home, just to have him return for Thanksgiving. And so there are family reunions everywhere, and parents and children and sisters and brothers, thousands of them will be very happy before the week has passed. Thus there are so many happy memories and customs tied up with Thanksgiving Day that we all feel for it a strong and unique affection. However, these memories and customs, as a rule, have no relation whatever to the fundamental idea of the festival.

But even with the fundamental idea I am in hearty sympathy—I speak now of the virtue of appreciation and thankfulness. I myself am a lover of sentiment and good manners. I like to hear the words “Thank you” constantly on the lips of people. It betokens gentility and culture and graciousness of manner. One of the things I regret about this modern age and especially about young people is the way they take everything for granted, accept everything as coming to them by right, with little sense of appreciation. I am afraid we are losing many of those niceties of human communication which added much to its flavor a generation or more ago. And so it is good to have a festival devoted to this sentiment of gratitude, for the sentiments of appreciation and gratitude are to human life what fragrance is to the flower—the finest exhalation, the most delicate manifestation of its quality. And so it is quite difficult for me to inquire into the rationality of the observance of Thanksgiving Day. But perhaps my subject will give you the clue to what I have in mind. I am thoroughly in sympathy with the customs which have grown up about the idea. I am thoroughly in sympathy with the sentiment which it seeks to consecrate. My quarrel is with the things for which we should be thankful, and to whom this thanksgiving should be expressed.

I

Now, of course, the conventional answer to those two questions is that we should be thankful to God for all the

blessings which we have enjoyed. This theory is based upon the fact that there is a God who personally hands out blessings to men and to nations and that he has ears to hear the gratitude which we may express with our lips. But with the expanded knowledge of this universe and of human experience, it is no longer possible for us to believe in such a personal being, who holds in his hands the destiny of men and nations, and who arbitrarily visits them with his favors and disfavours. For this reason many of us refuse to fall into line with Presidential Thanksgiving proclamations. They are so anthropomorphic, they indulge in such unwarranted license of affirmation about the mysterious and inscrutable power at work in the world. No president or governor yet has had the courage to issue a sane and sensible Thanksgiving Proclamation. They are afraid even to translate the old idea into modern terms. In spite of all the change that has come over the world in the last three hundred years, no change has come into either the idea or the phraseology of the Thanksgiving Proclamation. The last Thursday in November is chosen for this festival because by that time practically all the crops are harvested. As Thanksgiving Day is observed every year, it naturally follows that the abundance or scarcity of the crops have nothing to do with the celebration. We are asked to give thanks on scarce years as well as on plentiful years. We are to give thanks even when we have nothing specially to be thankful for. Why? Because when the harvest is bountiful we should be thankful because it is large; when the crops are small we should be thankful because they were not a complete failure; and when they are a total failure we must be thankful because hard times bring us nearer to God by making us feel our dependence upon him.

The President of the United States summons the nation to church on Thanksgiving Day to give thanks to "Almighty God" for the abundant harvest and all other blessings. But what has Almighty God—I have no desire to appear irreverent—what has Almighty God as a personal being to do with the harvests? If it is he who produces our crops, then being Almighty there should never be a failure of crops. But since crops frequently fail, it follows that there

is no Almighty person in charge of them—unless he brings failure purposely. Therefore, if God is to be thanked for large crops, he must be blamed when the crops are a failure. If the big sound apples prove the goodness of God, what do the knotty and worm-eaten apples prove? If God sends the rain and the sunshine which develops and ripens our wheat, who sends the storms and the insects which destroy much of it? And if he sends both, then why not thank him for one and blame him for the other?

To illustrate further. In his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation during the World War previous to America's entrance, the President expressed himself as follows: "We have special cause for expressing our thanks to Almighty God for having preserved this republic from the awful conditions in which most of the nations of Europe find themselves." Now, let me ask, if we owed gratitude to God for having preserved the republic to a condition of order and prosperity, what did we owe him for having plunged Europe into its condition of chaos? Why could not a being who could preserve the peace and prosperity in America, not preserve peace and prosperity in Europe? In other words, if God deserved thanks for our condition of prosperity, was he not to be blamed for pushing the Europeans into their condition of agony and suffering? Or if he was not to be blamed for the plight in which Europe found itself, why should he have been thanked because famine and death were not stalking about in America. This theory, of course, is based on the naive belief that national prosperity is evidence that the nation's conduct is pleasing to God, and national misfortune is evidence that the nation's conduct has been displeasing to God. God is interested in nations and suits his treatment of them to the way their behavior impresses him. By this standard we are able to detect that America's unprecedented prosperity of the past decade betokens that our jazz era is singularly pleasing to the Almighty, and he is rewarding his good children with baskets of prosperity. But this theory does not very well fit the circumstances, and leads in cases of death and misfortune to the old pitiful cry "What have I done to deserve this?" All life becomes a cowering before a deity whose wrath sends down misery and doom. On the other hand,

the theory is quite as bad on its positive side. It would mean that every stroke of good fortune is the direct reward of one's good behavior and a proof that one is looked upon with divine favor, which leads to an exasperating and unbearable priggishness.

But the theory that God rewards and punishes nations according to their conduct, and that we should thank him because we have been good and got paid for it, does not seem to satisfy the ideas of certain people. There is not much reason for giving thanks for that which we have deservedly won; so the governor of one of the states proclaims that "It has pleased Almighty God to distinguish the people of this state by unmerited and unwonted favors." In other words, he has bestowed blessings which we did not deserve. Here, indeed, is reason to be thankful for the undeserved blessings of this particular year, but much reason to despair that we are at the mercy of such an arbitrary God. Such a deity is too uncertain a quantity. Next year he may pick some other undeserving state for his distinguished favor. And the same thing is true of individuals. If we are dealing with a God who bestows rewards and punishments according to one's deserts, we know where "we are at," and we can win his favor, provided we know what he wants; but if we are dealing with a God who arbitrarily distributes blessings whether or not they are deserved, where are you? Another governor, disregarding the merits of the case, asks us to be thankful to God for the bounty of the past year, and also to indulge in acts of charity toward those who have not thus been favored by plenty. But, if an all-wise and all-good God has chosen not to favor certain people, what right have we to thwart his purpose by giving to them what he has denied them? Or, to put it the other way, if it is not his fault that they are without plenty, why should we feel that our bounty is due to him.

II

It is thoughts like these that suggest what I have called the irrationality of our Thanksgiving Day. With all their variations these theories suggest that the Almighty is interested in, concerned over, and interacts with the affairs

of nations and individuals. Now, of course, no one can be at all sure of the precise nature of the Almighty, but we can be fairly certain that the Almighty is not the sort of being described in these proclamations. If we have learned anything in this modern time it is that the almighty powers which reign throughout the universe are impartial and impersonal in their relations to nations and individuals. These powers, or the sum total of them conceived of as a unity, insofar as we can learn, are utterly indifferent to the things which men believe to be good and bad, worthy and unworthy. Let me illustrate.

Under ordinary conditions, the atmosphere at sea level exerts a pressure in all directions of about fifteen pounds per square inch. It exerts the same pressure upon the civilized man as upon the savage, the Christian as the heathen, the honest man as the thief. Without doubt all the powers of the universe are similarly impartial, pressing upon all alike. The man to whom the atmospheric pressure of a low altitude is oppressive may go to the mountains and find himself exhilarated by the lower pressure there, but he has done himself a favor by accommodating himself to gravitation. Gravitation has not done anything to help him. For him to build an altar on the mountain-top and offer thanksgiving to the gravitation-god that there the air was lighter, might be a poetic thing to do, but hardly rational. Now all our relations to the universal powers that be, are, I believe, similar to our relation to atmospheric pressure. We get along well or ill according as our efforts chance to harmonize with them. Accommodation, adaptation, co-operation, these are the words that spell health, success, happiness.

The winter's cold that will one of these days drop down upon this city will bring no great discomfort to those who are prepared with warm clothing and well-heated homes. They are able to accommodate themselves to it. To the unfortunate, the improvident, the unprepared, to those whose clothing is thin and ragged and who have little coal it will bring misery, illness, and death. Yet the winter's cold is no respecter of persons. It does not choose out the ones it shall torture. It plays upon all alike within a given area, but not all alike are able to adjust themselves to it. It is the

same, I believe, in regard to all the processes of nature—to the rain which falls upon the just and the unjust; to the disease germs that strike us down with sickness; to the so-called accidents that rend our flesh and break our bones. No, my friends, we are not at the mercy either of a just or an arbitrary God, we are in an indifferent universe to which we must accommodate ourselves. We cannot rely upon a beneficent providence, we must rely upon ourselves and one another. If some of us have plenty and others little, it is not due to the activity of an Almighty God. It is due to a great many circumstances, among which human effort and human ingenuity, and perhaps human dishonesty, have played no small part. And those of us who have reason should no doubt be thankful; but if so, let us give our thanks where they are due, and not use the achievements of men for the decoration of the God we have created for ourselves in the sky.

III

For what, then, should we be thankful? Thousands of people approach this season with very little apparent reason for thankfulness. After plodding through a year in which the fates seem to have been extremely unkind, they find it difficult to lift their hearts in a pean of praise. They feel more like crying out in despair at the ill fortunes which have attended them. They feel more like responding as did the farmer in that rustic poem "Give Thanks for What?"

"Let earth give thanks" the deacon said,
And then the proclamation read.

"Give thanks for what, an' what about?"
Asked Simon Soggs, when church was out.
"Give thanks for what? I don't see why;
The rust got in and spiled my rye,
And hay wan't half a crop, and corn
All wilted down and looked forlorn;
The bugs just gobbled my pertaters
And gracious when you come to wheat,
There's more than all the world can eat;
Onless a war should interfere,
Crops won't bring half a price this year;"

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"Give thanks for what?" asked Simon Soggs
"Fer the freshet carryin' off my logs?
Fer Dobbin goin' blind? Fer five
Uv my best cows, that was alive
Before the smashin' railroad come
And made it awful troublesome?
Fer that haystack the lightnin' struck
And burnt to ashes?—thunder'n luck!
Fer ten dead sheep?" sighed Simon Soggs.

The deacon said "You've got your hogs."

"Give thanks? And Jane and baby sick;
I e'en wonder if old Nick
Ain't runnin' things!" Etc.

And many people have occasion to feel exactly as did Simon Soggs, so that it seems to me on the old theory, we should be entitled, not only to a day of national thanksgiving, but a day of national complaint. And so far as results with the Almighty are concerned, doubtless one would be as effective as the other.

Thanksgiving, however, in spite of all that may be justly said against its underlying religious assumption, is a wholesome custom. It is a day set apart for our looking on the bright side of life. There is a pietistic gospel hymn which says:

"Count your blessings, one by one,
And it will surprise you, what the Lord hath done."

We may discredit the claim that the blessings came from the Lord, but they came from somewhere, and when we look them over there are a surprising number, frequently beyond our desert. Life is good, in spite of its worries and heartaches and moments of despair. Life is stronger than death else life would disappear. Life has more of joy than of sorrow, else we should not be sane. Life has more of good than of evil, or it would be more than we could bear. The balance is in favor of the positive, the affirmative, the good. This is not to say, that life is free from suffering or that it cannot be made vastly better; but it is

to say that the reflection upon its goodness which Thanksgiving suggests is sensible and true. If we think rightly upon it, on Thanksgiving Day we shall have more to make us glad than to make us sad, though it will have its sadness too. Count your blessings, the sources of present satisfaction, the memories of by-gone joy, the precious hopes for the future. It is so much easier, and much more common, to dwell upon our misfortunes and our discomforts than upon the things which give us what joy we have. This is a season to contemplate the blessings which are ours; and be thankful that we are what we are and that life means and has meant so much. I say thankful that we are what we are, I mean that we have within us the indomitable spirit that can rise above circumstances and assert with Henley:

“Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods there be
For my unconquerable soul.

It matters not how straight the gate
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.”

IV

But to whom shall we be thankful? It is difficult for us simply to be thankful, the very thought suggests a concrete object for our sentiment. Well, although we must discard the idea of God as a person who is directly concerned in these matters, I can still see reason for some cosmic expression of appreciation. We know that back of all things there is a force which is the source of everything; and ultimately all things are what they are because the universe, the cosmic order, is what it is. In this all-embracing scheme we live and move and have our being. We are its offsprings; on it we depend; our life is part of its life; our pulse beats part of its rhythm. We do not make entirely ourselves and our own faculties. Likewise the bounties of nature by which we live we owe to the mysteri-

ous and inexhaustible powers of the life which we share. All the riches and fertility of this vast continent man finds awaiting his conquest and use. More than that—all the powers of mind by which he conquers it, he also finds. It is, therefore, natural to feel a sense of awed appreciation of we know not what cosmic power at work in things; and out of this feeling to exclaim with the great American poet of democracy—"Praised be the fathomless universe."

This, however, is but one-half of the truth or less; it is by virtue of the other half or more that our sentiment of gratitude for the blessings of life must be transformed. The fact is that nature is no longer merely nature. It has been made over by man. Axe and spade, plough and hoe, directed by man's intelligence and wielded by his patient labor, have put the mark of his inventive and creative mind upon it. Through his efforts, and not by the grace of any divinity outside of him, have the wilderness and the solitary places been made to blossom like a rose. He has joined and sundered continents, made new lands, new lakes, new streams to water the waste places that he found. He has tunnelled mountains and bridged streams, he has developed rapid transportation and almost immediate communication with every part of the globe, he has developed the arts and literature, he has come to understand the forces of nature and has bent them to his will, making them his servants—in fact, he has taken this bare old planet and transformed it into a living world. Thus the original cosmic providence has been replaced by a human providence. And here emerges that new conception of Thanksgiving for which I plead—an outpouring of the heart toward the providence of man. Here is a providence which has been and actually is operative in the world. It is a providence which has not only increased the fruitfulness of the earth and provided our material necessities, but gained by man's patient and heroic effort, knowledge and truth, justice and good will. Our thanksgiving should be primarily an outflow of gratitude to Man.

Herein lies the irrationality of our traditional thanksgiving. People have been accustomed to ignore the human providence altogether and return thanks to God for "all the

blessings of this life." But this position if pressed means a denial of man's responsibility, and reduces our thought to the absurdity of the argument I presented a moment ago. Let me make all this concrete. Not so long ago down East I was invited to take dinner with an old friend—a hard working man who has had a rather stiff struggle to make ends meet. A small family of five was gathered in a humble dwelling around a rather bare table. Before the meal began all the heads were bent and the father gravely asked the blessing, saying, "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly grateful." Again at the close of the meal the heads were bowed while one of the children said "We thank thee, Lord, for the food of which we have just partaken." All human reference was omitted. The doors of human gratitude were shut tight. Not a single one of those young hearts was taught to throb in thankfulness toward the hardworking father who had labored the week through to procure this meal, or the tired mother who day and night had lost all thought of self in ministering to her household. Would these little hearts be better or worse for a recognition of the human providence which had been at work to serve them?

Here is another scene. One day as I stood upon the beach, where we are accustomed to spend our summers, I saw a woman, dripping and panting, carried out upon the sand. She had been perilously snatched out of the boisterous sea by a brave life guard. After she was revived, her heart swelled with thankfulness for her escape, and she lifted her hands to heaven and thanked God for a miraculous rescue. And my offended spirit felt like crying out: "Look not above, but beside you. There is thy providence, that dauntless hero and servant of the endangered. Better forget thy God than forget him."

Yet another familiar scene in the heart of a great city. A group of children are playing on the sidewalk which is their only playground. In the excitement of the game one of them runs with heedless mirth into the middle of the street, right into the head of a motor car. The driver does his best, but the wheels grate over the mangled body before he can stop. The poor little bleeding victim is picked up

and carried to a drug store, to await help. The destroying forces of life—"accident" we say—have made havoc with one more young life. Left to the mercies of God, the end would be near. But, behold, the repairing forces of a human providence are set swiftly to work. Within a few minutes an ambulance arrives upon the scene, all traffic giving way to this prompt messenger of healing. Gently the little broken and bleeding body is placed in it and taken safely to the nearest hospital. In a little while the stripped form lies in the operating room and a skilled surgeon equipped with the instruments and knowledge of the ages, backed by all the surgical resources of human invention, is doing the best that man can do for man. Gently he cuts and binds, washes and anoints, a band of trained helpers assisting. When an hour or two later the unconscious little body awakes from its alleviating sleep to a puzzled consciousness of its condition, it is lying in an immaculate cot in a small aisle of quiet in the midst of the city's roar. The best of human skill, taught by long centuries of experience, nurses the body back to health. By and by the smiling child leaves the hospital to resume its life in the family, and on its first Sunday the members go to church and the thanks to God are rendered. The child heart, knowing not that it has been the recipient of the blessings of mankind's accumulated toil and thought, owns no gratitude to man; is taught to feel at this moment no thrill of overmastering thankfulness to his human benefactors, assumes no vows to pay his vast human debt. The prayer ascends to heaven—"We thank Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of life."

Now you understand what I mean. Is it not strange that the grateful recognition of the human providence which is constantly operating around us should be so rare? Is it not strange that we should not sometimes at least offer our thanks to humanity for all that is included under the name "civilization"—those blessings of safety and peace, of justice and equity, which we owe not to any divine intervention and help, but to the steady, dogged persistence and valor and heroism of our race? Is it not strange that no such note should sound in our Thanksgiving proclamation?

Do we forget that it is man who has conquered not alone the wild beast in the jungle, but the wild beast in himself; who has stayed the flood, and the tornado, the plague and the pestilence; whose invention and labor have achieved the wonders which make our modern life much more healthy and livable and marvellous than that of our ancestors? Occasionally some sense of our human achievement and indebtedness does break forth, as in that splendid chorus of Sophocles in his *Antigone* which I have read to you, or in modern times in the songs of such men as Shelley and Swinburne and Parry, who sings:

We praise the men of the days long gone
Faithful and brave, loyal and sure,
Who cleared the path their firmness won,
Making it plain for men unborn and for all time secure.

We think with love of those who fell,
Lost in the stress, living in vain;
Who knew not light nor wisdom's spell,
Wandering helpless, maimed and blind, condemned to
helpless pain.

We may take a hint from this outburst, namely, that we include in our conception of human providence, not only the few great men who are held in renown for the more splendid conquests of our humanity, but also the vast multitude of the unknown in all lands and through all ages—the hosts of the suffering unwearied mothers of men; the slaves and serfs harnessed to the yolk of the oppressor; the unremembered artists and craftsmen who have adorned life with beauty; the singers, sages, inventors, discoverers, all the forgotten folk who have added their unremembered increments of value to our vast human inheritance. There is no exaggeration or sentimentality in this view. One of the most learned and most sober historians of early man writes: “We stand upon the foundations reared by the generations that have gone before, and we can but dimly realize the painful and prolonged efforts which it has cost humanity to struggle up to the point, no very exalted one after all, which we have reached. Our gratitude is due to the name-

less and forgotten toilers whose patient thought and active exertions have largely made us what we are."

V

Here then is the object of our thanksgiving, but how shall it be expressed? The ears of these are deaf to our words of appreciation. We can best express our thanks by so living and improving our heritage that the future generations may have cause to be thankful to us. The sentiment of gratitude for which Thanksgiving Day stands is dramatized most usefully, not in hymns of adulation and fervent references to alleged divine interventions in American history, but in a social consecration of our efforts to make this a brighter and better world. In the language of the old prophet Isaiah, "Bring me no more vain oblations—seek justice, relieve the oppressed." Thanksgiving Day is a day of unfulfilled social possibility. The sentiment of gratitude should find a positive social expression, and not be exhausted in mere theistic theatricals. It is a day for contemplating the brighter side of life, a day of generosity toward those who still live and serve us on every hand, a day of social consecration to the improvement of that heritage which has been preserved to us by the toil and sacrifice of the millions who have preceded us on this planet. Thus Thanksgiving Day becomes a day of broad human meaning both for the development of the sentiment of gratitude toward our fellowmen, and for the consecration of our effort toward the realization of a better world. And in order to make it a day worthy of its traditions, if I were President of the United States I would issue a proclamation something like this:

To the people of the United States of America.

It having been an honored custom with the American people that the last Thursday of November be set aside as a day of memorial and rejoicing, of the homecoming of the wanderer and the reunion of families, of the gathering of friends for mutual merry making, of a renewed and quickened sense of man's dependence upon Nature's bounty; a day of harking back to the heroic deeds and strenuous efforts of our forefathers, a day made sacred to us by the

pleasant and wholesome memories of by-gone years, I, therefore, do proclaim and designate the last Thursday of the present month of November as again the day on which this worthy custom shall be observed.

Furthermore, I exhort and request all my fellow citizens on this day, insofar as consistent with the public weal, to abstain from servile labor and make joyous holiday. I entreat all whose circumstances permit to gather together as families about the home table, and if any be absent, to remember them with kindness and affection. I further urge that on this day we forget our misfortunes and grievances, no matter how great they have been, and center our attention upon such benefits as we have received during the past year, and for these be truly thankful. If, in any community there be those whose poverty is heavy and hard to bear, I beseech the more fortunate to see that this be made a happy day for them. Above all I ask each to consecrate himself to the task of helping to reorganize the life of man so that poverty and all its attendant ills may be removed from the earth, that each year more people may have real reasons for thanksgiving.

Inasmuch as this is a day of family festival, I urge that on this day Americans shall consider ways by which war and other social ills which divide and destroy the home may be abated and done away. Inasmuch as it is a patriotic holiday, I ask the people to contemplate not only the past story of America, but how more glorious chapters may be added to its history. Inasmuch as it is a festival of thanksgiving, I ask that all men shall show gratitude for the past by so living that future generations may have more reasons for rejoicing than have we. Above all let it be a great Festival of Humanity, engendering sympathy with the struggles and outreachings of men everywhere and consecration to the highest ideals of life.

New Universes For Old

THE most essential thing in the mental equipment of a modern man is an accurate and vivid comprehension of the enormous revolution that has taken place in the intellectual realm during the last century. This has resulted in a progress of scientific knowledge and industrial achievement which gives us an entirely different world from that in which our immediate ancestors lived. These changes have come so gradually and have been accepted so complacently that very few of us have any conception of their significance. Most of us take the world very much for granted. We have ceased to wonder at its marvels; we are not often confused by its complexities. We ride in automobiles, gaze upon electric signs, listen to the radio without any sense of wonder whatever. We accept these things in terms of their utility or their beauty with very little thought of what they mean in terms of man's achievement in the utilization of the forces and resources of nature. We realize that we ride in automobiles instead of stage-coaches; but we fail to recognize that, with all the alterations in material civilization, must come equal transformations in our whole intellectual outlook on the universe, God, the world, man, and the objectives of human life.

With little realization of the contrast between America in the twentieth century and Palestine in the first century, it is not surprising that we find ourselves in great difficulty when we attempt to preserve the old concepts and institutions which were developed in that ancient time and remote place. If our mental concepts and our social institutions

are to continue in this present century as virile and significant forces in human life, they must be related to the world as we know it rather than to the world as it was known to the philosophers of two or three thousand years ago. Whether we like it or not, the fundamentals of these mental concepts and the foundations of these social institutions are today undergoing the most searching examination they have ever had, and in the light of the most brilliant and pitiless blaze that modern science can project. To understand aright the revolution which has been accomplished in the minds of thoughtful men during the last two generations, one must comprehend the fact that the world of the pre-scientific age was utterly different from our world. It is this difference and the influence which it is bound to have upon our thought and institutions that I want to bring to your attention in this new series on "Our Changing World." In each of these addresses I shall deal more or less with the science which has particular bearing upon the institution in question. And since the very basis of every institution and of human life itself is a cosmology, that is a theory of the universe itself, and since perhaps the most impressive phase of the impact of modern knowledge upon traditional ideas is to be found in the new cosmology, I begin this series with the subject, "New Universes for Old." This of course brings us to the sciences of astronomy and physics and the related science, astrophysics.

I

It would be interesting to note the theories of the universe that have been held by different peoples in different parts of the world; but for our present purpose we will go no farther afield than to trace the theories from the beginning in Hebrew thought, through Christian speculation, to the present time; and then contrast the generally accepted cosmology on which our institutions are based and that of today.

To the writer of Genesis the universe was a very small affair. At first it was a sort of two-story structure. There was the flat earth, anchored in the midst of the surrounding ocean; and it was roofed over by a firmament, solid as if beaten out of malleable iron. In this firmament were win-

dows for the waters to come through in the form of rain, and off in the distance were the four corners whence came the winds. To this firmament were attached the sun, the moon, the stars—a “greater light for the day” and a “lesser light for the night.” And above this firmament was the abode of God and his angels. This was the earliest thought of the universe as we find it in our traditions. A little later there was added a sort of basement, making it a three-story structure. Beneath the surface of the earth there was an underground world—the abode of the spirits of the dead, which later come to be the habitat of the evil spirits, and their prince—the Devil. This idea prevailed for many centuries, with very little variation.

In the early half of the second century there lived in Alexandria a famous astronomer, Ptolemy, and he gave us what has come to be known as the Ptolemaic theory, which held the minds of men until the fifteenth century. This theory constitutes the framework of Dante’s great poem and Milton’s epic. In this the earth was a sphere and was at the center of the universe. It was surrounded and enclosed in a series of concentric crystals, transparent spheres, one within the other. To the first of these was attached the moon; to the next the sun, and to the rest in their order the then known planets. Outside of these was one to the surface of which were attached all the fixed stars. Beyond this was still another, which was supposed in some mysterious way to be moved by divine power, and in its motion to carry around with it all the others. In this way the movements of the heavenly bodies were explained.

As time went on people found great difficulty in explaining astronomical facts by this theory, until finally it was no longer possible for scholarly men to accept it. Then came Copernicus with his discovery of a new universe. He conceived a theory which forms the basis of all modern astronomy, namely: that the sun was the center of the solar system, about which the planets, of which the earth was one, revolved; and that the fixed stars were probably other suns at great distances. Here was a tremendous revolution in thought, which interchanged the position of the earth and the sun in our universal system, putting the sun instead of

the earth at the center of the universe, and destroying completely the limited and circumscribed conception of the universe upon which all our old ideas and institutions were built. Yet the Copernican revolution was as nothing compared to the achievements of modern astronomy. Modern astrophysics has completely annihilated the old notion of a heliocentric—sun-centered—universe and has shown that our sun and its surrounding planets represent but a most insignificant entity even in our own galaxy or group of stars. And yet our universe, as this galaxy is sometimes called—that which comes within range of the eye, roughly bounded by the Milky Way, is in itself, but one small item in a universe of universes. Present day astronomers estimate that there probably are millions of galaxies in the cosmos comparable to our group of stars. One recently discovered galaxy of stars is estimated to be one hundred and seventy million light years from the earth. If you wish to reduce that distance to miles, multiply it by six trillion—the number of miles light travels in a year moving at the speed of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second. In the light of modern knowledge our solar system almost disappears in terms of galactic systems. As Prof. Shapley says: "Instead of being the center of this universe, our sun is but an insignificant speck around which flies a shadow called the earth." This earth, with a circumference of approximately twenty-five thousand miles, seems large to us, and yet if it were used as a model of our galaxy of stars, with the heavenly bodies distributed through it in their relative positions and true proportions, in that model, our earth would be a minute speck too small to be seen by the naked eye.

Note the contrast between this conception of the universe and that upon which our traditional ideas have been built, in which the earth was the center of existence and the only important object in the universe, all other objects—sun, moon, stars, planets—revolving about and serving it. We now know the earth to be one of the smaller of eight planets which revolve about the sun. Some of these planets are more than a thousand times in bulk the size of the earth. Like these other planets and in practically the same plane with them, the earth moves in an elliptical orbit around the

sun, keeping at an average distance of ninety-three million miles from that glowing body which provides it with warmth and light and energy. Thus it is rushing through space at the rate of twenty miles per second in order to complete its orbit in the lapse of time which we call a year; and at the same time it revolves upon its axis once in twenty-four hours to give us what we call night and day. Our earth is a part of an orderly system of planets, each of which moves in accordance with definite and specific regulations. If we could be transported in some magical way to an immense distance from the sun, we would see our solar system as a group of whirling balls about a great luminous center. And if we moved still farther away, trillions of miles, the planets would fade entirely from view, and the sun would shrink into a point of light, like a star. For the sun is a star, and the stars are suns. Our sun looks larger than the other stars simply because of its comparative nearness to us. The universe is a stupendous collection of millions of stars or suns, many of which may have planetary families like ours.

So our sun is but one of the many stars which form our stellar galaxy. And though it seems fixed in respect to the earth and its fellow planets, it too is in swift motion through space. So far as our observation goes, the pathway of the sun is a straight line; but every other movement in astronomy is elliptical, so it is no doubt moving in an elliptical orbit so tremendous that it would require centuries at the sun's speed of twelve miles per second for any curvature to be apparent. And as the members of our solar system move in a disc-shaped rather than a spherical portion of space, so our galaxy of stars is shaped like a flat disc, like a thin watch; and our solar system is somewhere near the center. When we look at the Milky Way, our gaze is directed toward the edge of the disc, and the stars are so numerous and so distant that they blend into this peculiar light. Between us and the limits of the stellar galaxy in that direction there are myriads of stars. When we turn in any other direction we look toward one of the faces of the disc. Between us and the faces or the side limits of the galaxy within which we live, there are comparatively few stars.

Distances and dimensions within the stellar galaxy are literally beyond human comprehension, and there is no use talking about them. Though many of the stars are hundreds of times as large as the sun, space rather than mass is the real characteristic of the galaxy. Light, travelling at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second, reaches the earth only eight minutes after it leaves the sun; but the nearest star is so distant, that its light leaves it four and one-half years before it reaches our eyes. And many of the stars in the Milky Way are so far removed that the light which we see twinkling in the heavens tonight left them en route to the earth before man appeared on the planet, scores of thousands of years ago.

No doubt many of the other stars have planets revolving about them, just as our sun, although our telescopes as yet are unable to reveal them. Venus is probably the only other planet in the solar system on which life, as we know it here upon the earth, could exist; but it is quite likely that the conditions similar to those on the earth are approximated on hundreds of the many planets which no doubt exist in our galaxy. In any case, we have no reason to conclude that life is limited to those conditions of temperature, atmospheric pressure, and light with which we are familiar. If the vital energy could develop life so minutely adapted to the earth conditions, it is quite probable that living creatures may be adapted to environments beyond the range of our experience. In fact, there may be existence of a much higher nature than that which we think of as living matter, far beyond even our most fantastic imagination.

So this galaxy of stars which we think of as the universe has expanded until it staggers our imagination by its size and splendor and possibilities. But even this is but a drop in the ocean of existence. Beyond the bounds of the stellar galaxy, of our universe, other galaxies of stars, other universes are now known to dot the farther reaches of limitless space. So distant are they that the giant suns which they include appear to blend together in vaporous clouds of luminous matter which cannot be resolved into separate bodies by the most powerful telescopes so far invented. Only by deductions from their spectra can we know that they

are distant stellar systems. Some are so remote from us that it requires a hundred million years for light to traverse the intervening space. More than thirty of these clusters have been discovered in the last decade, which would suggest that the portions of the whole universe thus far discovered by man are only the smallest fractional corner of totality. This universe, as some suggest, may not be infinite, but when we consider such magnificent distances as these, such a suggestion becomes a mere play of words—finite or infinite, it outreaches the grasp of the human mind.

Thus the earth immediately shrinks from the position of the largest and most important unit of the cosmos to a "relatively insignificant and highly recent astral exhibit." It is most inconsequential indeed; and to think of it as the chief product of the creative endeavor of God and the supreme object of his divine solicitude, immediately becomes preposterous and is recognized as a primitive misapprehension. In fact, the whole idea of God, and its attendant philosophies, fades into the realm of non-understanding. How can men fathom the problem of God when they are unable to grasp the slightest intimation of the meaning of the universe. Even what we seem to know of its existence and working is but the attempt to translate into human experience that with which our feeble senses bring us into contact. The problems of cosmic reality completely outdistance the intellectual capacity of man; and one becomes appalled at the irreverence of the Christian clergyman, who talks about God and his purposes with the same intimacy that he discusses the activities of his neighbor.

II

When we turn from the extremely large to the extremely small and examine the more recent investigations in regard to the constitution of things, we are still more bewildered. Just as the astronomer and physicist overlap in their study of the heavens, so physics and chemistry join hands in the investigation of the intimate structure of the atom. These have demonstrated that energy is the physical ultimate, and that matter is but an incidental manifestation of energy. There is no such thing as solid matter and no such thing

as dead matter. Everything is alive with motion and energy. Even stones which seem absolutely inert are a bundle of incessant movement. Everything—we ourselves, the earth, the stars, the whole universe—is built of molecules, just like houses are built of bricks. And these molecules are composed of various numbers of atoms, and these atoms are not packed together, but circulate as freely as dancers in a ball room. In a little bubble of hydrogen gas no larger than a drop of water there are trillions of atoms. And every atom, of whatever kind throughout the universe, is built up of electrons in conjunction with a nucleus. And the most noteworthy point is not merely the minuteness of the parts of which the universe is constructed; but the stupendous energy that is locked up in each atom. Each electron bears to the complete atom the proportion of a speck of dust to a room, but it whirls around the center with an inconceivable velocity, many thousands of millions of times in a second. So that what looks like perfect rest is in reality a rapidity of motion beyond all conception.

So the physical ultimate reveals itself as force, energy; and we are impressed with the absolute unity of the universe, which in spite of its name has always seemed to have an essentially dual nature. No longer is there a chasm between the natural and the supernatural, between the material and the spiritual. In spite of the handicaps of our vocabulary and the limitations of our mental capacities we see only one ultimate—energy. Stones and trees and men and stars—all made of the same thing, the differences being due only to the variation of electrons in the atoms, and the complexity and arrangements of atoms in the molecules, and the organization of the molecules in the objects. If my body as I stand here and this pulpit could by some magic be instantaneously reduced to their primal elements, the distinction would disappear; and I presume the electrons could be reformed into different atoms, which in turn could be arranged into different molecules, which again could be organized into an entirely different object. Thus not only do the old distinctions between material and spiritual disappear, but the old distinctions between so-called dead and living matter, and lower and higher forms of living organ-

isms fade away. The difference is no longer one of kind, but of degree—difference in organization and complexity.

Along with this revolutionized idea of the extent and the nature of the universe has come the principle of change as the vital universal element in cosmic development. That is to say, this one energy is constantly forming and reforming itself into new combinations—an eternal process of breaking up and reforming. In place of the old static notions of a perfect creation a few thousand years ago, with very slight alterations thereafter either in the heavenly bodies or in organic life on the earth, we now know that change is the vital and universal law and that no such thing as a static condition exists anywhere. Everything is in a state of flux, alteration—some of this manifesting itself in what we call development and progress while other changes represent disintegration and retrogression. Nothing remains what it is. No forms, no suns, no planets, no organisms, no men are perpetual. They all come into existence, continue through a process of change, and pass away. The only permanent thing is the energy itself, all the forms in which it manifests itself are transient. The only eternal thing is change.

This energy through constant change manifests itself in myriad forms of life here on this planet. And the great contrast between the world revealed by modern astronomy and that of pre-scientific days is fully equalled when the modern biological world is compared with that of Biblical times. The only animals and plants known at that time were those native to the hills and fields of Asia Minor, a few dozen kinds of living creatures, which were sharply differentiated and easily distinguished, reproducing each after its kind. There was nothing strange in the thought that a wooden barge could be constructed sufficiently large to shelter two of each sort. How different is our knowledge of the living world! Today we have one hundred thousand different species of beetles, four thousand kinds of mammals, nearly five thousand kinds of ferns, one thousand kinds of deep-sea fishes, and so on indefinitely. At least a million species of plants and animals have already been classified

by our patient and hardworking scientists, and new kinds are being found every day.

But it is not the number that creates the difficulty; the trouble arises when it is found that the sharp distinctions, which were evident when few animals were known, disappear completely as the number expands. Animals and plants are not definitely isolated in distinct groups, but one group grades into another until the distinctions disappear. Even the apparent gulf between the plant and animal kingdoms is now bridged by creatures which are really "plant-animals." The species concept is no longer a satisfactory explanation. Nowadays the term merely means an artificial group selected from a continuous stream of constantly varying and blending individuals, for convenience of speech.

If we follow this continuous stream of variation in living things we come across man. Man is not a strange creature here on earth, transplanted by the gods and protected by their providence. He is just one of these varying forms of life on the earth, who for the time being has gained ascendancy and controls the situation. How long he will remain in control no one knows. It is intimated that the insects are gaining ground on him every year and will eventually dominate the earth, just as did the reptiles in a previous period. But man, remember, is an incidental offspring of the earth. In the old conception the world was made especially for him. Everything in it was designed to contribute to his welfare or to his illfare if he incurred the displeasure of his God. He was the superior being, not because he had won his way to this position, but because he was thus made by the creator. The place in which he lived was the center of the universe—sun, moon, stars revolved around him.

But modern science reveals him as a very different creature. His place in the universe has been tremendously shrunken since we have fathomed the depths of space and figured out his origin and nature. In geologic time man has lived but a moment on this planet. In astronomic space, he is but an ant crawling on a hill in the wilds of Africa. The earth is neither the largest nor the smallest, the hottest nor the coldest, the most central nor the most remote among

the planets of the solar system. Except for the fact that you and I are on its surface there is nothing particularly distinguished about it. And our sun is just an ordinary star. There are many larger, many smaller; many hotter, many colder; many brighter, many duller, in the far-flung galaxy of the Milky Way. And this galaxy—it is but one in a multitude of star-clusters scattered through space. So our earth is just a common planet, in an average system, in an ordinary galaxy floating through space. Only our presence for a brief span of years upon this insignificant earth makes it important to us.

For the same reason I presume other planets are important to other creatures. There is no reason to assume that sentient creatures do not exist elsewhere in this infinite universe. It is hardly likely that this universal energy has found expression only in this one type of life on this planet. Perhaps on some distant sphere the achievements of this universal energy far outstrip anything that man has attained. But this is only a matter of speculation. What we are interested in, is that part of the universe with which we come in contact. So for us this earth in this particular period of time is important. This is our home, and the hour of man has struck, and so here lies our opportunity. Man has gained dominion over his fellow creatures, he is rapidly gaining mastery over the inanimate forces of nature—will he by his intelligence and co-operation climb on to the golden age of peace and happiness, or will he by his strife and competition annihilate himself and hand over the mastery of the planet to another creature. This earth is not a stage on which man enacts a role created and directed by another; it is his natural environment challenging him to overcome all handicaps and successfully achieve a satisfactory life.

But how is this to be done? In the pre-scientific world anything could happen. Magic played an important part in everyday life. Things happened at the caprice of ruling powers whose whims and intentions changed from day to day. Ours is a world of law. Effect follows cause with unvarying relations. Order and regularity reign, and nothing but human intelligence can interfere. In the pre-

scientific world the forces of nature were supposed to be under the direct control of supernatural beings who used them to reward favorite sons or punish wayward men. Jove hurled his thunderbolts at every human being who incurred his displeasure and gave victory and success to those whom he liked. Jehovah drowned all the men and women, except one family, because of their wickedness, and magically supplied food to his chosen people in the desert. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire rained from heaven because of their corruption; and he lengthened the day for his favored Joshua to overcome his enemies. But our world plays no favorites. The rain falls alike on the just and the unjust. Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes result from inflexible causes without any regard for the conduct of the inhabitants of a particular locality. We know that material prosperity has no connection with righteousness, neither has poverty any relation to unrighteousness. All these things result from the operation of natural and social laws, and can be controlled only by knowledge and obedience or control. And ignorance of the law excuses no one. Lack of knowledge of the relation between the mosquito and malaria does not protect the ignorant from the ravages of the disease. Adaptation, control of natural forces, co-operation—these are the words that spell a satisfactory life.

III

What is the significance of this new universe as revealed by modern science? There is no question that it brings about an entirely new attitude toward human life. The earth immediately shrinks from the position of the largest and most important unit in the cosmos to a relatively insignificant and very recent astral fragment. Likewise, man who thought himself the "lord of all creation," existing from the beginning and continuing forever shrinks to a highly "temporary chemical episode." Astronomically man is almost totally negligible. Listen to the great astronomer, Prof. Shapley: "Rather recently an incident happened in the life history of the sun. It threw off a fragment, and the earth was born. Before this for trillions of years the stars had poured out their radiant energy, the celestial bodies had rolled on, law had governed the universe. Before that

event, you and I were electrons and atoms in the solar atmosphere. Since then we have been associated with the inorganic and organic evolution of a smaller concern. This gaseous planet quickly liquefied, a crust was formed, and atmospheric conditions brought about certain chemical reactions, a green mould formed in spots on the planet, and here we are—parasites on the energy of the sun that cast us forth.”

Not only has modern astronomy demonstrated to us the cosmic obscurity and insignificance of mankind; it has also made it evident that man has no heavenly father on whom he can lean for guidance and protection. Even if we grant the existence of a God, he would be too majestic, too remote, too impersonal, for us to assume his direct solicitude for such an unimportant and ephemeral item in the cosmos as man. These two notions of man's cosmic insignificance and the absence of any immediate personal God represent contributions of tremendous importance for human society. It means in the first place the utter destruction of the whole geocentric, earth-centered idea, on which all our philosophy and institutions are built. In the second place it revolutionizes entirely the meaning and purpose of human life. Man is no longer the material habitat for an immortal soul, trying to live in such manner that this hypothetical entity might in the end be translated to its eternal home in heaven. He is now the leading member of the animal kingdom, who has forged his way to the top by sheer intelligence, and who is embarked on the great task of trying to work out for himself an efficient and satisfactory life here on this planet. And this thought immediately supplants any feeling of despair that may come as the result of contemplating astral spaces and time.

If man is insignificant and obscure in cosmic perspective, he is master for the time being, “king for a day,” when viewed in relation to the planet which he inhabits; and his attention is immediately brought back to the significance of this earth and the human race for himself. He is impressed by his inability to affect or influence the physical universe beyond this particular planet. In other words, modern astronomy has the result of turning our practical

interest back upon our little planet as never before. Though we may be entirely dependent upon factors coming to us from outside the earth, such as sunlight, cosmic rays, and so forth, man can do nothing whatever to control or direct such external forces and influences. Therefore, the chief practical result of modern astronomy is to concentrate human interest upon our planet and to emphasize the all-absorbing importance of mankind upon the earth. It brings us back to Humanism with a vengeance and teaches us that the supreme task of mankind is to create for himself a satisfactory life, and that all his institutions—churches and schools and families and governments and industries as we discuss them in this series—must be fashioned to that end. Are these institutions, in the light of the best available knowledge, organized in such a manner as to contribute in the largest way to the fullness and freedom of human life? If not, they must be so transformed as to bring them into harmony with this purpose.

This new universe also makes it forever plain that the great problem of man is not to adjust himself to the cosmos—a meaningless proposition—but to adjust himself to his physical environment, to his inherited culture, and to his fellowmen. In fact, if man would hasten his effort to this end, he must abandon the old hunger for cosmic support and the old craving for supernatural solicitude, and adopt an attitude of courageous concern and effort toward human life. How beautifully this thought was expressed by Professor Otto in his *Things and Ideals*: "Accept the stern conditions of being physically alone in all the reach of space and time, that we may then, with new zest, enter the warm valley of earthly existence—warm with human impulse, aspiration and affection, warm with the unconquerable thing called life; turn from the recognition of our cosmic isolation to a new sense of human togetherness, and so discover in a growing human solidarity, in a progressively ennobled humanity, in an increasing joy in living, the goal we have all along blindly sought, and build on earth that fair city we have looked for in a compensatory world beyond."

This man can accomplish; because after all we are an integral part of the whole scheme. We are not alien chil-

dren in a strange and foreign land. We are a product, and so far as we know, the finest product of the whole process. We stand as the sum total of the best it has produced, at least on this planet. We have developed an intellect with which to understand it, a sense of beauty with which to appreciate it, and a degree of power with which to conquer it. Being its product we find about us all the materials necessary to improve our lot and satisfy our demands. It rests with us to turn the materials to good use. Men of the world, rise to your high-born part!

“Lo, man has laid his sceptre on the stars,
And sent his spell upon the continents.
The heavens confess their secrets, and the stones,
Silent as God, publish their mystery.
Man calls the lightning from its secret place,
That he may shrink the spaces of the world, . . .
His hand has torn the veil of the Great Law,
The law that was before the world— . . .
And now men trace the orbits of the law,
And find in it their shelter and their friend.”

“We men of Earth have here the stuff
Of Paradise—we have enough!
We need no other stones to build
The Temple of the Unfulfilled—
No other ivory for the doors—
No other marble for the floors—
No other cedar for the beam
And dome of man’s immortal dream.

Here on the paths of everyday—
Here on the common human way
Is all the stuff the gods would take
To build a Heaven, to mold and make
New Edens. Ours the stuff sublime
To build Eternity in time!”

New Bibles For Old

OUR subject today is the third in the series on Our Changing World, namely: New Bibles for Old. Our purpose in this series, you will recall, is to show that our attitudes of mind and our institutions have not kept pace with our scientific knowledge regarding both natural phenomena and social relationships; and that if any kind of harmony in our life as well as improvement is to be achieved these old institutions and opinions must be replaced by new. First, we discussed the universe, in which I tried to show you the contrast between the universe as revealed by modern science and the universe as conceived in Biblical days upon which our opinions and institutions largely rest. I showed you also the revolutionary effect this had upon our conception of man's place in nature and the purpose of human life, that man can no longer be considered a fallen angel whose business it is to regain his position in heaven, but that he must be recognized as the head of the animal kingdom on earth and that his business is to achieve a satisfactory life for himself while here. Then we discussed new churches for old. I told you that the church as an institution was built for serving the former purpose, and today we need churches which will serve the latter. In short, that the business of the church must be transferred from that of saving souls in heaven to that of ministering to the development of a full and free life on earth. And of course we spoke of some of the details of church organization in order that it might better serve this end.

Today I am to speak on "New Bibles for Old." I was not quite sure in outlining this series whether or not to in-

clude this subject in the list. I am not certain that the Bible can be considered an institution; but in view of the tremendous influence which it has had upon our civilization, I believe it can; and in view of the mighty effect it has upon our modes of thought and life today, I am sure there is no institution which needs more serious consideration; and whether or not we need a new Bible to replace the old, there is no doubt that we need a new attitude of mind toward the old Bible. The Bible occupies a crucial position in Christian civilization. Primarily it has provided the outlines of the religious philosophy for the whole of the Western world. It tells us of the creation of man; his subsequent fall and the launching of the divine curse upon the race; the origin and selection of the Jews as the chosen people of God through whom the world should be saved, the gradual development of the messianic hope; and the coming of Jesus as the vicarious sacrifice of the only begotten son of God, so that the human race might be rescued from the curse of sin, believe, and be saved. The Bible thus contains the very core of the religious life of the Christian world, indeed it is the authority on which this tremendous religious assumption is built.

In addition to serving as the foundation of the religious scheme which has dominated western society, the Bible has implanted many other views, particularly in the realm of history, of natural science and of ethics, which have profoundly influenced western civilization. In its historic sections the Bible gives us the long accepted version of the origin of the human race and human culture; an account of the rise of moral codes, an interpretation of the origin of the different races, and the only history that most people considered of importance down to the time of Jesus. At one time the Bible was unquestionably the most important historical work known, and Biblical characters occupied a position of importance far transcending that of the outstanding figures of secular history. Even today a great majority of people obtain most of their knowledge of ancient history from the Bible.

Again the Bible has probably exercised a greater influence upon the human race than any work of natural sci-

ence ever produced. The Bible gave to western civilization the accepted view of cosmology, the essentials of astronomy, the orthodox version of geology and biology, the view of psychology held until very recently, the Christian version of anthropology, much medical knowledge, and some physics and chemistry. So powerful have been the Biblical conceptions of these sciences that they still hold their ground with the majority of mankind in our western civilization. Despite the progress of science in all these fields, which so thoroughly discredits the whole Biblical interpretation, the sacred version still prevails outside the circle of the learned minority.

In the realm of morals, that is of human behavior and conduct, no one could for a moment doubt its predominating influence. The ethical precepts which were included in this book have always been regarded as the ultimate basis of morality. Among the great mass of people, to depart in any way from the teaching of the Bible is to be guilty of immoral conduct. And even the more liberal people who have rejected all the Bible's history and science and part of its ethics, still regard the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount as the perfect ethical code to which all human conduct should conform. We may thus say that the Bible has been for western civilization, not only the most important guide to matters religious, but also the most influential historical document and scientific treatise and ethical manual thus far produced in the history of mankind.

In spite of this predominant influence which the Bible has exercised in the religious, ethical, historical, and scientific instruction of mankind, there is very little in the Bible that would recommend itself to man if the doctrines and descriptions were found in any other work. We have accepted the content of the Bible in all these realms exclusively because of the erroneous ideas of its origin and nature. Nothing could well produce a greater intellectual revolution in western civilization than a candid acceptance of the actual facts relative to the nature and composition of the Bible. I cannot conceive of anything more important in this modern time than to get people to approach the

Bible in the same detached and objective way that they would approach any other collection of literature; and thus come to realize that it is a purely secular product of fallible and relatively ignorant men, and contains no more truth or has any more authority than any other collection of ancient literature. I cannot conceive of anything that would be a greater stimulus to human progress than to relieve the people of this erroneous conception of the origin and nature of the Bible. So long as the Bible is considered the infallible word of God, there is little hope of progress, for it means that men's thought and conduct are tied to the standards of the time in which the Bible was written, and only such new truths and new methods as conform to this ancient standard will be accepted.

I

So much for the importance of the Bible as an institution, and the necessity of a change of attitude in regard to it. Let us now come more definitely to our subject—New Bibles for Old. My purpose this morning is not to attack the Bible, but to substitute for it that which will more adequately express the intellectual and ethical aspirations of our time, to do the work in this modern time that a Bible is supposed to do. The word Bible, as you know, simply means book. The Bible is *the* book, the book that in a peculiar manner discloses the inmost secrets of the nature of man and the method and purpose of his life; and for this very reason it has been tied up in the past with what was thought to be the purpose and will of God. Among those ideas which were common to all the religions of the past is the idea of revelation. All the old religions have taken as their fundamental idea—God, and the very next thought is that of the revelation of God. God must reveal himself somehow and somewhere and sometime. A God which conceals himself entirely would hardly be a God. From the beginning of time all over the world the cry has gone up for God to reveal himself. Men have pled for the spoken voice, for the written word, for an intelligible communication which could not be mistaken, as coming from their God. Now such a revelation people

claim to have in their Bibles. Every religion above that of the savage has its Bible. The Chinese pay homage to the wise words of Confucius; the Brahmans prize their Vedas; the Buddhists venerate their Pitikas; the Zoroastrians cherish their Zend Avesta; the Scandinavians, their Eddas; the Greeks, the songs of their mighty bards. The books of the Old Testament constitute the Bible of the Hebrews, and these in addition to the books of the New Testament constitute the Bible of the Christians. To each race and religion, its own Bible is believed to be the best, because intelligible to it, because most in sympathy with its genius; and as time goes on each religion comes to look upon its Bible as the very word of God, and the only word of God, all other Bibles being but false pretensions.

Of course this is the attitude which Christians hold in regard to their Bible, composed of the books which make up the Old and New Testaments. It is to them a sacred book written by men who were directly inspired by God, and therefore it contains the very word of God, in its wholeness and completeness, and teaches the infallible truth in regard to the origin and nature of the world and of man, and is an unerring guide to human conduct. This theory in its logical form makes the Bible the standard of all truth and knowledge and the people who hold this theory and apply it consistently are bound to accept only such findings of modern science as are substantiated by Bible texts, and make the teaching of the Bible their standard for moral conduct. And of course this is why a real understanding of the Bible is perhaps the most important problem we have to meet at the present time. For the Bible, you must remember, is the keynote of this modern theological controversy. It may take the form of an attack on evolution, but the heart of it is the Bible because the sole reason for the attack upon evolution is the fact that it contradicts the Bible in certain important respects, the principal reason why our advance in almost every direction is barred is the fact that modern civilization conflicts at so many points with the teaching of this book.

Now I have no fault to find with Bibles, when properly understood. It is only when they are invested with an

authority which they do not contain that they become dangerous. When understood for what they are and when restricted to the people and time they are supposed to serve they are quite all right. My theme is that the Bible required for our modern civilization is quite different from that which served ancient times, and the mischief comes only when the old Bibles are carried over into the new civilization. Take these Bibles about which I have been speaking. As a rule they contain the highest and deepest thought of the periods from which they sprang, respecting man's relation to the Infinite, to his fellow beings, and to the mystery of his own inward nature. They include the purest expressions of faith and the finest aspirations after truth, the sweetest sentiments of confidence and trust, hymns of praise, proverbs of wisdom, readings of the moral law, studies in the workings of destiny, rules of worship, prayers, prophecies, sketches of saintly character, narratives of holy lives, lessons in devoutness, humility, patience, charity, that were known to these people in those times. They express the whole upward and inward tendency of the minds of the people and the times from which they sprang. Nothing has place in them that is not felt to concern the higher life. The Veda abounds, it is true, in matter so dry and dusty to us that we cannot read it; but it is all-important to the Hindu. The Old Testament contains long books of dreary chronicle and fanciful legend, stories which seem to us immoral, and superstitions which we feel to be dangerous; but to the ancient Hebrew these things had tremendous significance. Likewise the New Testament contains many things we never care to read; it is filled with myth and legend, and it closes with a wild stormy book that is anything but edifying to the modern religious mind; but to the early Christians these expressed the most fervent devotions of the religious life.

So I have no objection to Bibles. If I had, I would not be suggesting that we substitute new Bibles for old. What I object to is Bibles which have outlived their usefulness, which are invested with an authority that they do not contain or which have been transplanted among a people whom they do not fit. And this is exactly what has happened in connection with the Christian Bible. It represents a mode

of thought and life which in every direction has been supplanted by the findings of modern science. It has been invested with the authority of God himself by the claim that it is a direct revelation from him; and it has been transplanted in our western civilization which is entirely different from the oriental civilization in which it was written and whose thoughts and feelings it represents. And so aside from the tremendous harm done by regarding the Christian Bible as a supernatural revelation, which makes it the norm for all human thought and conduct and thus bars the way to progress, the Christian Bible is entirely inadequate as a guide to human conduct or as an interpretation of man's spiritual life or as an inspiration to noble living. It is in this sense that I deal with it this morning. I disregard entirely the preposterous claim that it contains any scientific or historical authority, and confine myself to a treatment of it as an interpretation of man's ethical and religious experience, and an inspiration to high and noble living.

II

Even here it must be readily seen that the Bible of Christianity cannot possibly meet the needs of modern man. Man today must have a broader and more comprehensive Bible—one that gives him the ethical and religious experience of the whole race, and not merely that of the ancient Jews and early Christians, and one that helps him understand this experience in the light of what we now know about man's origin and nature. What we need is a Bible that will interpret the ethical and religious experience of the whole of mankind in the light of modern thought, that will mean to the whole world in this twentieth century what the Christian Bible meant to the small Christian community in the second and third centuries. We need a Bible containing the word of man instead of the word of God. But how are we to get such a Bible? The conception of such a Bible has lately been in many minds, and attempts have been made to give such a Bible to the world, attempts such as *The Message of Man*, Mr. Connell's *Book of Devotional Readings*, Robert Bridges' *The Spirit of Man*, Dr.

Coit's *Social Worship*, and the very recent compilation by Robert Leavens, entitled *Great Companions*. These are collections of the pearls of thought from the writings of all nations, ancient and modern, the classification and arrangement of them, and their publication as a comprehensive book of the religious life, which shall meet the wants of the large and increasing multitude who need a greater supply of spiritual food than can be furnished by the religious literature of any people.

This idea is to be commended because it delves into the mines of spiritual thought and gives to the people gems of religious expression which they otherwise would never see; and also because it helps them to realize that the Bibles of the race are, like its literature, expressions of the human mind in its natural moods; and once this is conceded it must follow directly that all these expressions, if equally genuine, are of equal validity. No race has a monopoly of religious faith or of religious expression, of aspiration or of praise and reverence. These things are not confined to certain religions; they are human qualities, and to bring people to a realization of this fact, is the first step toward the acknowledgment of the Bible of Man. Emotions of gratitude, virtues of loyalty and truth, the graces of patience and humility are as respectable and beautiful in Persia as in Palestine, on the plains of India or the steppes of Russia, as in the fields of Galilee or on the mount of Olives. Prayer breathed under the shadow of the Rockies is as venerable as prayer breathed under the shadow of Sinai, or under the trees of Gethsemane. Religious emotion, however varied in mood or expression, is essentially of the same stuff, it is human and not Christian or Mohammedan or Jewish. And the recognition of this fact is the primary factor in the establishment of a human Bible. Yet noble and helpful as this idea is, it fails to meet the full demand of the enlightened mind as a Bible of Man, because it is bound to be limited by the experience, the taste, and the aspirations of the one who compiles it. In fact, nothing less than the whole literature of mankind can satisfy the modern mind. I do not mean that a modern man would consider the whole of human literature as his Bible, but

each at least will insist upon making his own selections, of finding for himself that which best ministers to his ethical and religious life.

It is an open secret that the Christian Bible does not meet this requirement. The Christian Bible is much less read than its reputation would seem to imply. It is more praised than perused, more celebrated than studied. It is diligently circulated; it is conspicuously displayed; but the familiar acquaintance with it, where the reading is not made a sacred duty, is not common. And the reason is that the Christian Bible, taken merely as a book of religious inspiration, is too remote from the natural sympathies of men. It is oriental and mystical. It represents a mode of thought which has long been outlived, and a science and philosophy which has long been outgrown. Men are interested in it only as they are interested in antiquities, in ancient expressions of religion and ancient modes of life.

For instance, our lives today are by no means guided by the precepts of the Christian Bible. The doctrines and ideas and beliefs that are moulding our lives are to be found in the writings of the ages and not in the Bible of the Hebrews and Christians. Where is our book of Genesis, our book of beginnings? It is not in the Bible. If we wish to know something about the beginnings of this earth and human life, we turn not to the Bible but to the geologists and the biologists. If we wish to know about the beginnings of the races and languages we turn, not to the story of the Flood and the Tower of Babel, but to the anthropologists and philologists, and so on. The book of Genesis that we believe in and that we are guided by was written by Copernicus and Galileo, by Newton and Darwin, and other scientists. Where is our book of the Law? Do we really go to the Pentateuch to find out the principles by which we shall guide and govern our daily lives? If we want to know what is good for man physically we turn to the sciences of physiology and hygiene; and we study psychology and psychiatry to comprehend the processes involved in man's behavior. Where are our histories, those that really move and control the world? They are not Samuel, the Kings, Judges, the Chronicles. They

are the histories of Greece and Rome, of the Middle Ages, of the rise and progress of civilization, of England and America, all those that have given us the sources of that stream of life of which we are a part. These are the histories that are moving the modern world.

Who are our heroes? Are they any longer Samuel, Jephtha, Gideon and David? No, they are the men who have fought for truth and for freedom and for human advancement. Our Heroes are Winkelried, the barons that met King John at Runnymede, Cromwell, that group allied with Washington in the American revolution, Abraham Lincoln, Garrison, men that have stood everywhere for truth and human right. These are the heroes that shine like stars in our moral and intellectual firmament, that give us the light by which we are guided and the inspiration for our everyday life. Where are our ideal women? Are they Miriam and Deborah, Ruth and Esther—those that are simply names to us in the Bible? Are they not rather Mary Carpenter and Florence Nightingale and Marian Evans of England; Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Thompson, Mary Livermore, Jane Addams, and a hundred others that I might name who have helped make and shape the life of today? Who are the prophets and seers that lead and inspire us now? They are in part those who have written the noble and burning words of the Old Testament prophecies, but added to these are all the great religious leaders and social reformers of the ages who have lifted up and led on the life of the world, men like Beecher, and Channing, and Parker.

So I might continue. I merely illustrate by these several subjects treated in the Bible, to show that these are the real scriptures which mould and shape our thought and life, while those of the Old and New Testaments are remote and unreal. But a man's bible must not be remote and unreal. Bible thoughts are simply best thoughts, and may come to the minds of men in America in this age as well as to the minds of men in Palestine two thousand years ago. There are books of science that bring the mind into very close proximity with the infinite and awaken feelings of the most tender awe and reverence. There are books of

history that introduce one to the indomitable spirit of man working itself out in human affairs in such a way as to make him bend his knee in worship. There are books of biography that reach the hidden places of the heart, stir noble emotions, exalt ideals of human character, and kindle aspiration. There are poems that excite the purest feelings of worship, that make the heart tremble with awe, glow with gratitude, burn with enthusiasm, melt with pity, and throb with joy. There are works of fiction that are more effective than the psalms of David or the idyl of Ruth, or the parables of Jesus, in engaging interest in the sorrows and joys, the fortunes and misfortunes, the heights and depths of human life and character. Why are not books like these worthy of the sacred name of Bible, if they do Bible work? Scriptures there are bearing the names, not of Isaiah or Solomon or David, but of Plato, Carlyle, Emerson, Spinoza, which rank high in the teaching, consoling, inspiring of the race. Shall they be considered secular and profane because they were not written in Hebrew and composed in Judea? Shall men reject them on the plea that the writings of Moses are older, that the works of Paul have the sanction of the church?

No one I trust will be so absurd as to imagine that I advocate the binding of all these books or a selection of them together in one big volume, to be called the "Holy Bible of Man." Binding books together between paste-board covers is not necessary to their performance of a unique office. They can do their work as well unbound, even better. The putting of the Christian Bible between covers, and calling it the sacred volume, has caused great mischief, for it has taken the writings out of the category of literature. By giving the volume a peculiar shape, and stamping on it a peculiar mark, the impression is conveyed that it has a singular character. If the collection were distributed through several volumes, and labelled "Early Hebrew Literature" or "Early Christian Literature," the charm would be broken. It is the unity of the volume that keeps up the illusion of the unity of its contents. But all scripture is not in the Christian Bible—could not be in any printed volume; nor is all that is in the Bible good scrip-

ture. The modern man recognizes scriptures so many that the thought of binding them together cannot be entertained.

Thus at all events one old and pernicious superstition is avoided—that of reading the whole Bible through as a sacred duty. Our fathers did this, and in doing it fancied they had served God well, and earned reward in heaven. At least this can be said, that no one can read the Bible of Man through. No one need attempt to deal with it as a pious undertaking, a piece of devotional work. The Bible of Man is a literature—or rather it is a certain level or class of literature—the literature of the higher life, the literature of inspiration. It is found all over the earth, it crops out everywhere. Of course, I would not recognize everything that has ever been written as a part of the Bible; but I would recognize everything that has ever been written and that does the work which a Bible should do, which has the standard that elevates and inspires the higher life. It is therefore an indefinite thing, and yet I would say that it can readily be recognized by a couple of very distinct peculiarities—it must meet common and universal wants, and it must communicate moral power.

III

First, it must meet common and universal wants. Now that the barriers between races and nations and religions are being broken down by rapid transportation and almost immediate communication, our Bible should express the religious sentiments of mankind. Nothing could do more for universal peace and harmony than a recognition of the universality of religious and moral sentiment, the breaking down of the belief that these are peculiar to any one people. So the Bible of Man is not for the few but for the many; not for the adherents of a particular theology, but for the people who accept any or no theology. It should concern itself with principles that all acknowledge, with moral laws that all confess themselves bound to obey. It must express moods of feeling in which all share, moral and religious sentiments which are universal, the property and peculiarity of mankind. The sentiments of adoration, veneration, praise, longing, aspiration belong to the race everywhere.

They should be the very staple of a Bible. These sentiments are recognized in every quarter of the globe regardless of the language in which they are expressed; and should constitute the bulk of what I would consider biblical literature. The moral sentiment is still more universal in its reach than the religious, because it comes closer to practical experience. The general principles of the Ten Commandments are written in the sacred codes of the most dissimilar peoples, showing the unity of the sentiment of social behavior. The Golden Rule is to be found in some form in the sacred literature of every people. The sweetest lessons of charity are repeated over and over by Egyptian and Syrian, by European and Asiatic lips. It is the heart of mankind that grows these natural flowers. They are not the result of some particular religion. The principles that constitute the good life are universal, no matter what religion people may profess. Different religions may give different proportions and shades to these qualities, but the basis is ever the same. And the literature that is written on the level of these moral and religious sentiments which are human and therefore universal is biblical literature, human literature, and therefore the literature which should constitute a Human Bible. No Bible is fit to be called the Bible of Man that can be enjoyed by a single tribe or nation, that can be outgrown in a hundred or more years. If it does not meet a response in a world-wide and world-deep experience, if it is not found native to human feeling, then it is not biblical literature and deserves no place in the Bible of Man.

That is the trouble with the Christian Bible. Large portions of the Old Testament, whole books, in fact, there are which interest no one but the antiquarian, and many which do not interest even so small a class as this. The New Testament comprises much that is incidental and local, the small concerns of Palestine, trifling matters of dispute, arguments on questions long forgotten, theories and discussions that never concerned many and now concern none, rules of conduct that have become obsolete, maxims that have lost their application, letters addressed to some passing emergency, and the Apocalypse that is curious as a piece of literature, but of absolutely no moment, and of even

less than none from a religious point of view, a book that owes its sacredness to its unintelligibleness. These are not genuine biblical literature, and the infrequency with which they are read, the difficulty in understanding their meaning, the falling away of sympathy with their contents, proves that they do not belong to the class of biblical literature. The Bible of Man must answer to universal needs.

The other criterion by which we can recognize the literature which should be included in such a Bible is that it shall communicate moral power. My old theological professor used to say that the test of inspiration is the power to inspire, and I am perfectly willing to apply this test to the literature that should be considered biblical. If it be applied we will find that there is in the Christian Bible some passages which are able to inspire, but these passages are few compared with the great volume of its content. We will find passages in every bible of every religion which are worthy to be included in the Bible of Man. But tried by this test of power to inspire, to communicate moral and spiritual enthusiasm, what thousands of volumes, unrecognized and disavowed by sectarian religious authorities, stand upon the shelves of secular libraries; but which naturally become a part of the Bible of Man. Some of them are treatises of philosophy—immortal dialogues of Plato, discourses of Socrates, poems of Shakespeare, of Browning and Tennyson and Walt Whitman, novels like Adam Bede and Romola, which touch the deepest places of the heart. It matters not what the book be called—drama, fiction, narrative, biography—if it does this work, it is material for a Bible. If it inspires it is inspired—the helping word is the “divine” word.

For example, let one who needs the calm of contemplation take up the poems of Emerson or Tennyson, of Browning or Matthew Arnold, and he will be satisfied as he cannot be satisfied in the whole literature of the Christian Bible. For the rousing of the moral nature to earnest purpose and resolve, for the awakening from sleep of the sentiments of truth, sincerity, justice, there is nothing in all the world so good as the earlier writings of Thomas Carlyle. If one is inclined to despair at the futility of social effort, let

him read the story of evolution and the history of mankind, and learn therefrom how slowly and yet how surely, nature works in lines of progress. If ethical precepts of a high order are desired, let him turn to the writings of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius and be filled with high resolves to serve mankind. Or if he has lost his vision of the Golden City of peace and righteousness, without which no man can work with zeal, let him turn to the dreams of men like Plato and Augustine and Thomas More.

If a man is afflicted with the disease of bigotry, let him trace the progress of religious ideas; let him muse with Volney over the ruins of the once magnificent house of the sun of Baalbec; let him wander with Layard over the mounds beneath which time has buried Ninevah's winged bulls; let him explore the rock chapels of Hindustan, desolate now for centuries; or climb the Acropolis of Athens and view the ruins of their devotion to the gods; or stumble about with Stephens among the sacred monuments of Central America, whose history vanished with the race that used them; let him endeavor to find the venerable beliefs of Egypt; and to unveil the thoughts that were hidden within the world-renowned mysteries of Greece; and seeing how the mightiest priesthoods have passed away, and the creeds of nations been forgotten, he will cease to vex himself about the cobwebs in his neighbor's brain.

Does one need courage to meet the perplexing problems of life and the venture of death, let him read the marvellous story of Captain Scott and the victorious death which crowned the failure of his adventure. If one is oppressed by the sense of loneliness in this vast universe and needs the stimulus of human togetherness, turn to Prof. Otto's *Things and Ideals* or feel the thrill of Prof. Hayden in his *Quest of the Ages*. Does one need peace of mind, then turn away from the hurly-burly of human life and enter that delicious region opened by the writers of natural history, the wondrous economies of trees and plants, the curious structure and habits of animals. Let one visit the Alps with Tyndall, go with Huber among the bees, explore the marvels of ant life with White, and a peace and quietness will sweetly steal into the mind.

For the serious sickness of the mind, for chronic despon-

dency and deepseated sorrow, for loneliness and bereavement, nothing is at once so soothing and so stimulating as biography—the lives of great and good men. These are scriptures indeed! See from them how little a space one sorrow makes in life. See scarce a page perhaps given to some grief similar to your own, and how triumphantly the life sails on beyond it. See what life leaves behind it when all is done—a summary of positive facts far out of the region of sorrow and suffering, linking themselves to the very life of the world. Read, you who bear a life-long burden, Talfourd's final memorials of Charles Lamb, and see how sweetly and patiently and thankfully a gentle nature can drink a cup bitterer than death. Who can speak of discouragements and griefs in the presence of a man like Abraham Lincoln or of a woman like Charlotte Brontë? Who can worry about the handicaps of life after reading the autobiographies of men like Jacob Riis and Booker Washington?

Such books as these which satisfy every longing and every desire of the common human mind and heart should constitute the New Bible to replace all the old bibles. We need to reach out everywhere and take the best that man has produced in every place and every time for our inspiring and consoling literature and if people will do this it will not only give them a Bible which will satisfy the mind and heart of modern man, but it will break down that distinction between so-called sacred and secular literature, giving the one an authority which it does not deserve and depriving the other of its opportunity and ability to heal and to help. It is this distinction that has caused so much of the world's trouble in the past, and it is this distinction which makes the Christian Bible entirely unfitted to this changing world. We need today to regard such books as I have mentioned as the real chapters in the human and eternal Bible that are being written age after age as the result of human discovery and experience—a Bible not yet complete, for man will never again make the mistake of closing the Canon; a Bible in which each new truth is a sentence, and each new discovery a chapter, and that shall continue to be written by the best and the highest elements in human life, so long as human life shall last.

The Conspiracy of Silence about Sex

OF all the problems which the alert and curious mind of man is considering, none is more important than that of the relation of the sexes. It touches us all and touches us more deeply than almost any other problem; and yet, as we look back over the history of the world or as we survey conditions in the world today, we realize that there is no problem which has been so bungled as this problem of sex, and that none of our human relationships are in such a mess as our sex relationships today. For centuries men and women, like blind-folded children with ears stuffed with cotton, have groped their way and today find themselves standing on the edge of a precipice, afraid to turn back and fearful of taking the next step. We want to know why, and we want to improve the situation. We resent being the sport of circumstances and we are beginning to understand that this instinct of sex—one of the two major human instincts—which has been so great a cause of suffering and shame and has been treated as a subject fit only for furtive whispers or silly jokes, is in fact one of the greatest powers in human nature, and that its misuse is one of the most destructive forces. So we have today a growing interest in matters of sex. And we are interested not in the abnormal or the bizarre or the sensational; we have no desire to penetrate the by-ways of vice. It is the normal exercise of a normal instinct by normal people that interests us; and it is of this that I wish to speak this morning.

The first essential in such a discussion is to realize that the sex-problem, as it is called, is the problem of something noble and something beautiful, and not something base and ugly. It is a thing that can bring to people the greatest joy and happiness if properly understood and used, and that brings only misery and degradation when ignorantly abused. It is a thing noble in essence, the development of the higher and not the lower creation. The lowest forms of life are without sex, only the higher organisms are sexually differentiated; and only as we pass from the lower to the higher do we pass from the less sexual to the more sexual, until in man we find it associated with prolonged and altruistic love. By what irony have we come to associate the instinct of sex with all that is bestial and base, unworthy of man's nobler aspirations? It has happened because as Miss Royden suggests, "the corruption of the best is the worst." I always like to remind people of that truth, especially when they come in contact with some degrading phase of sex—one of the greatest misfortunes that can happen to any one, especially in the tender years of life. Ever after they find it difficult to think of sex in terms of beauty. I think this can be understood only by remembering that the corruption of the best is the worst, and that we can measure the greatness and the wonder of sex love by the hideousness of debased and depraved sexuality.

In spite of all this, most of us have been walking in darkness in matters of sex. We have grown up in a period in which ignorance in sex matters has been regarded as a virtue, in which the spread of knowledge has even been illegal, with the result that our bootlegged information has usually been misinformation, which if it has not led us into by-paths of misery, has at least robbed us of the joy that might have been ours. As I look back over my career, and I believe most of your experience has been similar, I am convinced that the greatest injustice which society did me was that of withholding intelligent sex information at the time when it was most needed; for I need not remind you that it was only a few years ago that the silence on this question was absolute. The subject was taboo both in public and in private, the word sex itself being considered indecent. Even a physician or minister, if called upon to

discuss some of the deeper problems of life remotely associated with sex, had to watch his phrases as carefully as a sword dancer watches his feet. In the teaching of physiology in the public schools the functions of various organs of the body were described, but so far as could be learned normal people were entirely without sex organs. And if a child in the home was so rash as to ask any questions as to where the babies came from, he was rebuked for his curiosity, or informed with mysterious whisperings and head-shakings that these were things not to be discussed with children, or told out-and-out lies in the form of fairy stories about a bird called the stork or a wonderful man called the doctor. Occasionally a person, galled by this suppression, would speak out-loud about the facts of sex, but these people were speedily arrested and imprisoned, and their publications destroyed. Everywhere was the conspiracy of silence, courting illusion and glorifying ignorance.

Within the last few years there has been considerable improvement among intelligent people in this regard, and among some, not so intelligent, a dangerous reaction. Many people today are agreed beyond any question of dispute, that the facts of sex should be discussed with perfect frankness and candor, always of course within the limits of good taste; and especially that our children should be given accurate information upon every phase of this great field of human experience. And yet among the masses of people, the conspiracy of silence still remains. We find ourselves dominated by it at almost every turn. For instance, we find few individuals and no organizations who are willing openly to help us in promoting Margaret Sanger's lectures. I learned a few days ago from the sex education department of the difficulties of this work at the University, because with very few exceptions the members of the faculty are afraid of the subject, at least afraid to have it frankly presented to the students. I never speak on the subject without receiving a volume of protests, and no other ministers have the courage to discuss it openly. Dr. Joseph Collins, when asked by his publishers to write a book telling the truth about sex, replied quite truthfully that he would not be allowed to tell it. If he did, society would frown on him, the postal authorities would forbid him the use of

the mails, the censors would have him arrested, and his patients would let him starve to death. A year or two ago three professors at the University of Missouri were dismissed for sending out a questionnaire in order to learn something about sex. During the last few years almost every book with a sex reference has been banned in Boston, and just this last week the *Minneapolis Journal* refused our usual church advertisement because of the subject of this address.

I might multiply illustrations of this kind, but perhaps the most significant is the incident which resulted in the arrest and conviction of Mrs. Dennett a few months ago in New York City. Mrs. Dennett wrote a pamphlet for the instruction of her two sons. Later some friends learned of this and sought her help, and the pamphlet was printed for private use in other homes. Then it appeared in a great medical journal, and later in pamphlet form was given wide circulation by the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association, by Columbia University and the Union Theological Seminary. It would seem that the conservative reputation of these institutions would be sufficient to establish the right of this pamphlet to be distributed. But no, it has been denied the use of the mails, and its author is faced with a possible sentence of five years or a fine of five thousand dollars, or both. All of which means that the conspiracy of silence about sex continues, and that in this part of life, at least, we must continue in ignorance and fear, with all the disastrous consequences which such attitudes bring upon mankind; for ignorance is the road to disaster and misery, just as knowledge is the highway to security and happiness.

I

In all the realm of human experience I know of nothing more hazardous than this ignorance which is perpetuated and sanctified under the pretty name of innocence and virtue. On what other pathway of life do we insist that ignorance is a better protection from disaster than knowledge? Into what other field of experience do we allow human beings to enter without telling them of any of the conditions they will meet there or any of the resources at their disposal?

We would think it strange if a man were put in command of an ocean liner who had never seen a boiler, knew nothing of a compass, and could not tell a green light from a red. We would have been surprised if Lindbergh had started on his hazardous journey without any knowledge of aeroplanes or air currents or any of the things one is required to know before given a pilot's license. What would you think if I advocated sending a man who knew nothing of electricity down to the power house to operate its giant motors? You say these things are ridiculous and yet they are not one whit more ridiculous than sending young men and women out into the world, equipped with such passions of good and evil as have rocked civilization more than once, and giving them no knowledge as to their significance and the wise method of their use. If there is anything more tragic than uninstructed adolescence, it is only when in later years men and women launch out upon the great adventure of love, ignorant and afraid. No wonder that Balzac remarked that most men in love are like apes trying to play a violin.

If ever anyone bungled things, our forefathers did, with their censoriousness and religious fixations and pretences of purity. The evils of silence and evasion stare at us from the present situation. The tragedy is found on every hand in broken homes, feeble children, diseased bodies, shattered minds, broken hearts, sudden deaths. Pathological sex conditions, widespread prostitution, venereal diseases, confused morals, until one sometimes wonders if we are not in a vast world of imbeciles, and all the result of suppressions and inhibitions and incompatibilities due to the long tyrannical reign of ignorance. Sometime ago the Vice Commission in Chicago undertook to find out the source of supply of the victims of vice. In its report it declared that "the lack of information, education, and training with reference to the function and control of the sexual instinct, and the consequences of its abuse and perversion, appears at every point of our inquiry." I wonder if any of you saw Eugene Brieux's great drama *Damaged Goods*, when it was produced in this country about eighteen or twenty years ago. If so, do you remember how the patients came one after another into the physician's office—the working woman, stricken with a loathesome disease contracted from

her infected husband; the father of the young boy who had been led astray at college, the ruined girl from the city street, the society woman unhappy in her marriage—and do you remember how they all explain their tragedies with the same tell-tale phrase, “I didn’t know”? “Our greatest enemy,” says the physician, in the closing scene of this mighty play, “is ignorance. Ignorance, I repeat. The refrain is always the same, ‘I didn’t know.’ . . . People ought to know. . . . The mystery and humbug in which physical facts are enveloped ought to be swept away. . . . There is nothing immoral in the act that reproduces life by means of love. And yet for what we call the benefits of our children, we organize round about it a gigantic conspiracy of silence.” Now you see where I got the title for my address, which suggests the lasting impression that this drama made upon me. It is this same thought which prompts Dr. Joseph Collins to say in his excellent book on *The Doctor Looks at Love and Life* that “the foulest lie that has ever been perpetrated on mankind is the lie that there is anything evil or base about sex. There are some parental sins which should be labelled ‘unforgivable.’ One is failure to tell children about sex; another is to tell them in such a way that it engenders fear and anxiety.”

Not only should the effects of ignorance in this realm be measured by the misery which has been visited upon the race, but also by the happiness that has been missed; not only by the actual unhappiness experienced, but by the potential happiness unexperienced. Thousands, yes, millions, of people who are acquainted with the physical facts of sex are so unacquainted with its technique that they never realize its fullest possibilities. Most men and women grope blindly, blundering, haltingly through their sex life and experience, so that it proves a disappointment, if not a failure. Let me quote here a noted authority. “Many of the difficulties, trials and mistakes of marriages are the direct result of prudery or a false ideology on questions pertaining to the most vital and intimate facts of life. . . . The drifting of so great a proportion of married people into the by-ways of disharmony and of marital dissolution is the inevitable result of our heritage of sex ignorance and sex lies. . . . Many wives utterly lacking in sex knowledge and

husbands vulgarly informed start out with the best of intentions; but under these circumstances it is foolish to expect a successful marriage. It may not result in separation, but frequently continues as an empty hull of marital discord, drifting aimlessly in the cross-currents of disillusionment, with the knowledge of a vague and indefinite something lacking. All the other essentials of a happy marriage may be present—yet how far from the ideal of a couple who are mated spiritually and physically in a consummate love.”

II

There is only one way to overcome this condition, and that is to lift the gloom, dispel the fear, move out from the dark room of lies and silence and subterfuge into the bright light of honesty, truth, and sanity in regard to sex. In order to do this, I think it is necessary to understand some of the reasons why people have been afraid of this question and so have joined in this conspiracy of silence. We must first try to understand the minds of our contemporaries as well as our own minds. We cannot attack an evil until we understand it. We cannot free ourselves from inhibitions until they have been analyzed; and therefore we must understand what the elements which contribute to this conspiracy of silence are. As I study the history of this problem and search the literature as well as my own mind I find many contributory causes, just a few of which I would mention briefly.

The first I hesitate to mention, and yet Bertrand Russell thinks that it is one of the most important, and especially one which has not been sufficiently realized by those who wish to cleanse sex of the filth which has covered it for centuries. And that is the fact that the subject of sex has been associated by nature with excretory processes, and so long as these processes are treated with disgust, it is natural that some portion of this disgust should attach to sex. In this respect the only cure is to develop a sane, although delicate, attitude toward all the natural functions of the human body.

Another reason for our silence on the subject of sex is the fact that sex relations involve an experience of excep-

tional intimacy, in fact, the most intimate experience of human life; and it is a matter of good taste and self-respect not to discuss those things which are intimate and intensely personal. There are certain experiences which belong to ourselves and not to others, and with natural reticence we keep these things to ourselves. Indeed, we have little regard for the person who is constantly talking about his own intimate and personal experiences. And among all these personal experiences sex stands out as the most intimate of all. It reaches so deep that some people cannot even talk about it with the one person with whom they share it. Thus there are frequently strange silences even about what people have experienced together, and this is not usually because of any fear, but because they are touched by a very deep reverence for something too wonderful to be degraded by outward mention. This is an attitude which should be respected, but we must not allow it to betray us into a conspiracy of silence which blocks all the paths of knowledge. Certainly, I would not have sex talked about on the street corners, nor discussed in social intercourse. The rules of good taste must govern matters of that kind. But the silence itself is not a virtue, and there are times and places when the most intimate things must be discussed. Not that one should discuss his own personal experiences in sex, but he must not let his reticence in this regard prevent him from discussing the facts of sex, especially with those who are dependent upon him for their knowledge. Hide away in your own hearts the secret things of your own lives, but never miss the opportunity of disclosing to the minds of your growing boys and girls those facts of experience without which they cannot hope to live in security and happiness.

In the third place, there is the mystery of sex relations, with their potential power of destruction. Man is afraid of mystery—that is, he is afraid of powers which may hurt and which are not understood and therefore beyond his control. In days gone by man was afraid of natural phenomena—the wind, the lightning, the waves and the rushing streams, because these things were powerful forces which he did not understand; but since science has revealed the meaning and harnessed the power of natural phenomena, there is no longer any mystery about it and therefore we are

not afraid. But the sexual passion is one of the mightiest forces of life, and carries within it tremendous powers of destruction, and we do not understand it, are unable to control it, and therefore we are afraid of it. It is this idea which accounts for the early religious practices of the race. When primitive man was afraid of anything, he proceeded to worship it in the hope of winning the favor of the deities who were involved in the phenomenon. Thus man in all primitive religions worshipped nature in a desperate endeavor to protect himself from the ferocious gods. In the same way he worshipped the forces of generation and conception in the form of phallic rites. All primitive religions contain certain phallic elements; and what do they mean? Simply that man was bowing down in mingled fear and reverence before the mightiest force of which he knew, and striving to control it to his own advantage by propitiation. In all primitive religions one of the most potent elements was the Taboo, and this was particularly operative in phallic religion. Most of the phallic elements of the ancient religions have been dropped, yet in the conspiracy of silence about the facts of sex, there still remains with us the fear of mystery and the Taboo.

Now I do not deny the mystery connected with sex relations, although the mystery that still remains is as nothing compared with that of primitive days. Then they knew nothing about it except that sex relations sometimes resulted in the birth of new life. Today we know all about the process by which this is achieved, but of course there is still at the bottom the mystery of life itself. But this is nothing to be afraid of, rather it is something to be investigated. Primitive man ran away from mystery or tried to appease it; modern man grapples with it, and tries to understand it and control it. But his chances in this respect are greatly handicapped by the old fear and consequent Taboo. In other words, the Taboo on sex knowledge insofar as it springs from this source, is pure superstition and should be discarded.

Finally, I would mention the most powerful factor in this conspiracy of silence, namely: the fact that to the great majority of people in the Christian world, there is something evil about sex. No matter how emancipated one is

from Christian doctrines, this superstition persists, so thoroughly has it been imbedded in Western culture. Search the secret places of your own mind, and see if you do not find a lingering suspicion that sex is something to be ashamed of, and therefore something not to be mentioned. Even the most enlightened men and women feel themselves under a sense of guilt when they face this great experience, either in reality or in conversation. Why is this? It is due to that conception of life which underlies the Christian philosophy about which I spoke last Sunday, that old warfare between flesh and spirit, between which there is supposed to be eternal conflict. The one can be enhanced only by the sacrifice of the other, and the whole purpose of life is the enhancement of the spirit through the annihilation of the instincts of the flesh. Now sex is very peculiarly a function of the flesh, and therefore is sinful and degrading.

While this doctrine has not been confined entirely to Christianity, the Christian church is almost entirely responsible for it in the Western world. To quote Dr. Collins again, "The church has a large responsibility for the reputed uncleanness of sex. Just as long as religion holds that debasement of the body not only enhances but determines elevation of the soul, and that the punishment and humiliation of the former contribute to and insure the salvation of the latter, the church will stand as a bulwark against sex enlightenment and sex decency." And that is precisely what the church has done in the past. This doctrine led to the extreme of monasticism in the Catholic church, whereby men mutilated and mortified the flesh in the desire to achieve eternal blessedness for the spirit. Sex relations constituted one of the vilest sins, except as they were purified through the sacrament of marriage. But even then they were degrading, because the men and women who wished to attain the heights of spiritual life, were not permitted to marry. This same idea took a little different form in the Protestant church in what we call Puritanism, which taught that pleasure is associated with sin, and that anything which is pleasurable is sinful. Most of us have long since discarded our Puritanism, but in many of us there still lingers the shadowy idea that somehow pleasure is separated from virtue. Now sex experience is pleasur-

able, so with the Puritan it is positively a sin, and with most of us there is a lingering suspicion that it is not quite right.

In addition this whole theory has been dramatically tied up with the theological doctrine of the fall of man. We have been taught for centuries that man fell from a state of innocence through the discovery of his sex attributes and powers which resulted in a sense of shame, and for this reason all children are "conceived in sin and born in iniquity." And it is very interesting to notice how this was all connected with sex knowledge. So long as Adam and Eve were ignorant they were innocent and morally perfect; but when they ate of the tree of knowledge they suddenly became sinful creatures. So here in this story lies the doctrine that innocence is identical with ignorance, and knowledge results only in sin; and ever since we have been confronted by the idea that sex knowledge is evil, and therefore we should be kept ignorant if possible.

Now it is right here I think, in this idea that sex is evil, that we can best break down this conspiracy of silence which has prevailed so long. The whole philosophical theory of dualism, on which it was based has been dissolved by the light of scientific knowledge, and as a result we have an entirely different theory of the meaning and purpose of human life. We know that man is a unified organism and that every function of his body and mind is normal and natural and therefore right. It is only through the misuse and abuse of these functions that evil enters upon the scene; and we will never be able to avoid the misuse and abuse of the sexual function until we understand it and its proper place in a normal human life; and we can never understand it and its proper place until we have brought it out from the dark room of degrading shame into the bright light of knowledge and respect. I know of no fouler superstition than this idea that sex relations are evil and something to be ashamed of. On the contrary, when rightly joined in the expression of true love, and with the full consent and ardent desire of the parties involved, they are the loveliest, as well as the most ecstatic experiences we know; and to associate them in any way with evil or with shame is to condemn utterly the whole of human life. I am one who believes that if there is anything sacred in the world it is human life.

And if human life is sacred then every normal function of human life is sacred; and if there can be any grades of sacredness, surely the highest and purest is here where the complementary elements of life meet, and by their meeting kindle the fire that gives beauty to the world, either through the creation of new life or through the consummation of human love.

III

Having thus sought to understand the elements which underlie what I have chosen to call the conspiracy of silence about sex, and having tried to show that these elements are without authority or reason, having also pointed out the disastrous results of this silence, let me now come to the positive side of my theme and proclaim that what the world needs today more than anything else is to deal with this subject frankly, openly, and constructively. I say frankly and openly and constructively because these are in direct contradiction to the traditional way of handling the subject. For in spite of all our conspiracy of silence, there is no silence. People do learn about the facts of sex. The question is not whether or not people shall learn these facts; but rather shall they learn them rightly or wrongly, under circumstances that make them clean and beautiful, or under circumstances that render them fearful and abhorrent.

There are only three ways by which this knowledge may be gained, two of which are utterly disastrous, and yet it is these two that the world has approved in the past. In the first place, young people can stumble and blunder into knowledge, as they fumble around in the darkness in search of some object. Dr. Woods Hutchinson, in writing on this subject, says, "There are few greater calamities than ignorance. Theoretically it is a negative state, practically it is a positive force. Leave a child in the dark and the last thing he will do is sit perfectly still. He will inevitably reach out and grope and stumble until he tears his hands upon all the thorns within reach, cuts his feet upon all the flints, or falls over a precipice. No light, however blinding or fitful or distorted, is half so dangerous as darkness. Light is the greatest foe of every thing evil." And this is one way people can gain their sex knowledge—by stumbling and blundering around in the dark. Thousands of people have gained their sex knowledge in this hazardous fashion; but

the price they pay for what they learn is costly and sometimes fatal. Talk some day with a physician or a psychiatrist and ask him what he knows about women who have gone ignorantly and thus unprepared into the marital relation, and about men who have blundered onto their sex knowledge by way of unhappy and sometimes devastating experiences. The world is filled with maimed and bruised and crippled and poisoned lives—men and women, who have had to stumble in the dark in search of light through the unguided and blundering use of powers which they are impelled to use in spite of their ignorance.

Secondly, young people, especially young men, driven by the imperative nature of their sex instinct, will do what Jean Valjean did in *Les Misérables*,—when the highways of Paris were closed against him, he took to the sewers; and so if they cannot travel the open highway to sex knowledge they take to filthy gutters, where sex flourishes in abnormal and perverted forms. There are plenty of places like this, where the whole level of human experiences is measured by sex-perversion and sex dirt. And that is where most boys have gone and are still going for their sex knowledge. They plunge into the filthy sewage. Some of them are drowned, and thus lost. Others get away sooner or later, but they take with them stains and impurities that cling forever. Getting their facts in this way, they come to think of sex as something wicked and dirty; and, worst of all, this attitude becomes a fixation which stays with them to the end of their days. It is generally true that men who have been through this experience can never look upon a woman, even upon their own wives, except in the light of their ugly experience. Here again the world is filled with people who have been in the filthy sewers, and who carry about with them the stench that defiles their whole lives.

In the third place, there remains the open road which is bathed in the warm sunlight of knowledge. This is to give our boys and girls, young men and women, yes and adults too, who have been denied it, frank instruction in the facts of sex as in the other facts involved in human life. When a child wants to know anything about sex, even the most intimate things, he should be given an honest answer in exactly the same spirit that his other questions are answered.

An adolescent boy or girl, wide-eyed and conscious of strange stirrings in the breast and yet mystified as to their meaning, should be told frankly all that they need to know. They should be guided intimately and carefully so as to avoid the pitfalls and dangers that permit their sex experiences to become cheapened and vulgar. Then as they grow older, at least before they dare to enter the marital state, they should be so trained in the technique of sex and the art of love that they could enjoy its depths of mystery and its potencies of beauty. And then as soon as they are married they should have full and complete knowledge of the best methods of birth control in order that they may enter into the full joys of married life without the fear of having children they do not want and probably should not have. I have not time to go into the details of this matter. I am only concerned this morning in helping to break up this conspiracy of silence in order that this whole sex problem may be brought out into the open and thus solved for the glory and happiness of men and women; and this will not be done until people are taught all the facts about sex with all the scientific accuracy and poetic beauty which lies at our command.

IV

I would not dare close this address without a word of warning. In every thing of this kind we are bound to face dangerous reactions, and in our enthusiasm for sex frankness and sex knowledge we may be tempted, as many are, to carry this matter to extremes that would prove to be as dangerous as our previous policy of silence. When I advocate the open consideration in public and in private of this subject I do not for a single moment mean to imply that all the barriers of reticence are to be removed, and these matters cheapened and debased by indiscriminate discussion by all persons, in all places, in all circumstances. I am not advocating the discussion of sex on every street corner, in every drawing room, or by every soap-box orator; but rather under conditions that conduce to feelings of reverence and beauty, and for the purpose of gaining knowledge, and not for the satisfaction of salacious desire. I believe with Dr. Cabot in his book, *What Men Live By*, when he says "The idea that anything can profitably be blurted out in

any language and to any audience, the ideal of pure frankness, is babyish and barbaric. . . . Such frankness is achieved only by maniacs and village gossips, the doors of whose minds swing free and let out indiscriminately whatever happens to have accumulated inside."

And if it is important that we should not discuss these matters in such a way as to cheapen and debase them, it is also important that we should not discuss them in such manner as to over-emphasize their importance in the scheme of life. There is grave danger and it is forecast in the present trend of literature, that the enthusiastic interest in this theme will tend to obsess us and result in throwing our consciousness out of focus. Nothing could be more disastrous than to persuade people that the facts of sex are the only essential things in human experience, and therefore matters for constant thought and speculation. It is a long way from Puritanism to Freudism, but one extreme is as dangerous as the other. Self-consciousness in any direction means an interruption of the normal workings of the human mechanism, and therefore an interference either with physical efficiency or moral stability. Dr. Cabot gives an amusing illustration of this in the case of medical students, while studying the phenomena of saliva. He says "Sometimes they become so vividly aware of their mouths that a copious and sometimes ludicrously inconvenient salivation results. . . . I have seen a hospital patient drooling night and day as a result of a fixed idea about the inside of his mouth." Here is a striking illustration of the reflex action of self-consciousness—of what happens when the consciousness gets fastened upon something which has no place in the ordinary processes of conscious life. And so there is much that ought to be kept out of consciousness most of the time. "Wise people do not think of their saliva. . . . Consciousness does harm whenever it interferes with anything meant ordinarily to be left out of it—the heart, digestion, one's feet in dancing, one's self while speaking in public." And this truth applies, as nowhere else, to the facts of sex. "To be constantly or imperatively conscious of sex is to be in a miserable or dangerous state." And discussion of sex and thought about sex present, of course, the constant peril of creating this very condition. Under no circumstance must we exaggerate the importance of sex, bring it perpetually to

attention, move it from the background of the mind where it properly belongs to the foreground where it does not belong. It is essential here as everywhere, if balance is to be maintained, that in all our discussion we keep everything in its natural place and see everything in its normal relations. Every element of the exciting, the unusual, the mysterious, the special, must be avoided as we would avoid the plague. We must do all we can to get our young people, and older ones too, to view the phenomena of sex with the same detachment, the same sense of impersonal, scientific interest as they view any other function of the body. It is important to know everything about the digestive process, but it is not necessary nor advisable to talk or think about it all the time. And so should it be with the processes of sex. It is impossible, I suppose, that the attitude of any normal person toward these two subjects should be identical, for the very obvious reason that sex is a much more tremendous and powerful force in human life than digestion; but this comparison, defective as it is, suggests the idea which must ever be kept in mind in all we try to do in this hazardous field.

So my plea this morning is for light in regard to sex, for control rather than suppression of facts. Without over-emphasis, I would have people regard their sex possession as their most precious heritage. I would teach them neither to jeopardize it nor to squander it, but to utilize it to their happiness and welfare. I would tell them that though sex tries constantly to suggest behavior, it usually succeeds only in influencing it, not in determining it; and the smaller its success, the greater one's self-respect. I would tell them that the rumor spread by poets, and the message broadcast by novelists, that the joys of the world are circumscribed by sexuality, are exaggeration and falsehood; sexuality sweetens life, but it is not what makes life worth living. It is a priceless possession to be wreathed in pride, not wrapped in shame, to be lifted from darkness into light, from sin to virtue. Human beings should be proud, not ashamed of their sex, and prouder still that they can dominate its display. What is it in humans that excites our greatest admiration? Poise, self-control, courage. In no way can they be more brilliantly displayed than in management of the sex urge.

The Supreme Discovery of the Ages

I TAKE my cue this morning, perhaps I should say my text, from a recent address by one of the greatest living scientists, and without question the most noted physicist, Prof. Robert A. Millikan. Not long ago he made this statement: "The supreme discovery of the ages is that the universe is governed by law and not the caprice of a deity." I think we must all agree with him, because upon this discovery rests the whole volume of modern knowledge. What we mean by advance or progress in human life is man's increasing control over his environment and over himself. This control, of course, is dependent upon an accurate knowledge of what his environment is and of what he is. And this accurate knowledge began only with the discovery that the universe is ruled by law and not by the caprice of a deity. With this discovery began the scientific revolution. Upon this discovery is based every scientific theory that has ever been formulated. All that we know about astronomy and geology, about physics and chemistry, about any of the sciences is the result of the discovery of this all-encompassing truth—that the universe is ruled by law and not by the caprice of a deity. Not only that, but all our technology and industry are based upon the discovery of this law. Our railroads and steamships, our automobiles and aeroplanes, our telegraphs and telephones, and all the humming wheels of the factories were made possible by the discovery of this great truth. Upon the fact itself we are dependent for our very existence, and upon the discovery of the fact rests the

truth that we have made more progress in the increase of knowledge and mastery of our environment in the last century than in all the preceding centuries of man's history put together.

And yet, this great discovery was fought for centuries, and in many quarters is still being fought, by the teachers of religion. This is perfectly natural, because this discovery has undermined the foundation of theistic religion, and has robbed it of practically all purpose and method. For instance, they said, "If the world is ruled by law, what use is there for worship, for prayer, for the mediation of priests? If the world is ruled by law, what becomes of God? For if law predominates, deity is unnecessary." Therefore, this supreme discovery of the ages has had as much or more effect in the religious life of the world as in every other realm of thought and activity. It is for this reason that I wish to speak about it this morning, trace for you the development of the idea, and contrast the ideas of the world ruled by the caprice of deity and ruled by law.

In the early days of mankind there was no conception whatever of law. Cause and effect had no orderly relation in the minds of primitive men. They knew only caprice. They thought of all the forces of nature in terms of their own experience, and therefore behind all the great movements and forces were persons who acted according as their desires or whims swayed them, making these movements and forces sometimes malignant and sometimes benevolent. But the thing to note especially, is that the early races put persons everywhere. There was a god of the year. Day and night were deities. The dawn, a goddess, led forth the dance of the rosy fingered hours, twelve other deities. The sun, a god, drove his flashy chariot wheels across the solid roadway of the sky; and at night the moon, "pale goddess," ruled the dusky hours and led out the stars for their night-long choral song. The wind and the clouds and the light, and the sky and the rivers and the seas, and the trees, all had their god or goddess. Nothing ever came to pass except as the work of some personal will. And these wills had no conference or understanding together, but each "did what was right in his own eyes." The god of the winds made

them blow to suit his own whim or caprice; or to help or harm as he took a notion. The god of the sky sent rain or dew or bright days, as best accorded with his own convenience, or as moved thereto by prayers or sacrifices. The god of the grapes gave plenty of wine, or blasted the ripening harvest, as he pleased. Ceres blest the corn or cut off the crop at will. Nothing was supposed to occur according to fixed and incalculable order. All was practically a gamble, because no one knew beforehand—except as they sometimes thought they knew by oracle or prophecy—what any particular god might conclude to do. This was the condition of thought throughout the so-called pagan world.

Among the Hebrews it was very much the same. While in the later centuries of their history they were monotheistic, that is, they had centered all these powers in a single person, and recognized but one God, the supreme Jehovah, they still thought of all natural forces as under the direct and constant superintendence of angels, who ruled as viceregents over the different departments of the world. There was an angel in the sun, an angel in the moon, angels of the winds and waters, rivers and trees, angels of rain and storm and darkness, angels of the crops and flowers, angels everywhere and the active agents in everything. This system differed from the pagans only in this—that these angels were supposed to be subject and answerable to Jehovah, who was the “king of kings.”

I.

Thus at first law was nowhere. This, in general, was the condition of affairs until very recent times. Perhaps few of you realize how modern a thing is this conception of law. Its first suggestion comes with Kepler, who attempted to formulate the law controlling the movements of the planets, but he was ridiculed because he sought to substitute law for the angels in the sun and moon and stars to account for their movements. The first great triumph of law was in Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation. This bound the orbs of the universe in the perfect and beautiful order that today makes astronomy the most exact and fascinating of the sciences. But by many the comet was still regarded as an

exception, a lawless and unaccountable wanderer in the sky. But when it was found that the law of gravitation was able to calculate even its apparent irregularity, and to tell from the path of its departure, just the year and hour of its return, even over the gulf of centuries, then much of the opposition to law was broken down. And modern science really began with the discovery of Alexander von Humboldt that "the world is ruled by law." Until his day, generally speaking, men believed that the world was ruled by a capricious God, but with the appearance of Humboldt's *Cosmos*, the reasons for such belief passed away.

This man of giant intellect had travelled over much of the world. He had ascended the heights of the mountains and wandered into the depths of the valleys. He had studied the writings of the ancients and of the moderns who had affected the development of scientific thought. He had reviewed the histories and the tragedies of the Greeks and the poetry and religious philosophy of the ancient Hebrews. He had mastered the learning of Germany and England, and was one of the most remarkable intellects which had appeared on the face of the earth since the time of Aristotle; and summing up all that he had learned, he gave us, after reaching the age of seventy-six, this simple generalization, "The world is ruled by law," which Prof. Millikan declares the supreme discovery of the ages.

From that day until this every advance of knowledge has verified this statement absolutely. Caprice and spirits and miracles are still called in by ignorant people to explain what is not understood; but we know from the past that thousands of things considered miraculous and inexplicable by natural law have later been explained and are now thoroughly understood, so that from known causes certain and definite results can be easily and always predicted with absolute certainty; and if anything can be learned from the logic of the past, it is certain that the remaining mysteries and unaccountable phenomena of the world and of human life will one day be known, and reduced to the natural and universal order of cause and effect. Caprice and lawlessness are already driven into the dark corners of the earth, where the light of knowledge has not yet penetrated; but

this is without exception true, that there is absolutely nothing that is known which is not subject to or explainable by law.

II.

This, of course, means that the whole theory of supernaturalism, which lies at the basis of the popular religion, must be discarded, and in order to show you how revolutionary this thought is I must, however briefly, contrast for you the conception of the universe as held by orthodox Christianity, and as held by men of science. Perhaps this distinction was best expressed by Martin Luther, who hurled his thunderbolts of ridicule against Isaac Newton, when he announced his discovery of the law of gravitation. Luther said, "Why, if we accept this law of gravitation, we are taking the universe out of the hands of God and putting it in control of a law." Precisely, considering the idea of God held by Luther and all of his followers; and now I proceed to elaborate this distinction—of the universe in control of God as taught by Christianity and in control of eternal and unchanging law as taught by modern science. For you must remember that Christianity, while accepting the universality of natural law, still believes in the supernatural, that there is a power over and above nature which can interfere with these laws.

The Christian church has taught for almost two thousand years that there exists a God over and above this universe who controls it, and that this God is a personal being with thoughts and feelings very similar to our own, that he is capable of love and mercy, and also capable of hate and punishment, and that he gives vent to his feelings in the management of affairs here very much as a human being is directed by his feelings in his relation with his fellows. This God created the world as a result of his own desire, very much as a man might build a house according to his own taste. He is above all natural law and controls things by his arbitrary will. The laws which we have discovered are supposed to have been formulated and placed in operation by him, and so long as everything runs smoothly all is well and good; but when even as the result of his own created laws things happen in contradiction to his will, he

interferes with these natural laws, sets them aside, and puts things into shape by means of a special divine act known as a miracle. Not only does he interfere as the result of his own will but he can be prevailed upon by men, through petition or prayer, to do things for their benefit in contradiction to his own divinely established order.

In other words, Christianity has taught that there is a system of law and order, but that it does not include the lives of men, and that it is subject to the will of God. The region which they think of as ruled by law is known as the world of nature, conceived as something outside of and beyond human experience, to which man himself is not a subject. And also that God, existing outside of nature and of man, reserved to himself the right of arbitrary interference in the ordinary working of natural law, and this for some purpose connected with the spiritual life of man. God was able to and did act upon man through occasional and direct manifestation of himself in dramatic form. He did this even of his own accord when he found that man was pursuing the wrong course, as in the case of his appearance in the Garden of Eden, after man had disobeyed and started on a downward career; or he did it on the request of man, as in the case of thousands of prayers which men believe have been answered. And upon this idea that God can interfere with the ordinary course of the universe, that he can interrupt the processes of natural law, rests the whole vast structure of Christian thought and experience with regard to control of the universe.

It is also believed, and taught by the Christian church, that man can escape the natural order and do things in contradiction to natural law by means of prayer. It has been taught that by prayer God can be prevailed upon to do things which he otherwise would not do, and that he will do these things regardless of whether or not they be in contradiction to the established natural order. Men have been taught that they could ask the most absurd things of God and have them accomplished, because God was a person outside of and separate from natural forces and laws, who at the request of man, came in to interfere with and change the method of their regular working.

Let it be said, however, to the credit of men's intelligence, that in spite of the authority of the church there are many who do not believe in these doctrines, and that during the past generation there has been a growing widespread doubt as to whether there ever were or can be such things as miracles; and as to whether prayer has any such power or produces any such results as has been commonly supposed. In other words, men have come to doubt the possibility, or at least the probability, of any interference with the established order by any power outside or inside of it. And this is the rock on which the Christian church is being broken today, with its division into Fundamentalists and Modernists—the former taking their stand against the belief in universal law, the other putting themselves into an illogical and impossible position by accepting the universality of natural law and at the same time holding on to their idea of a supernatural God.

III.

Now, of course, all this doubt even among Christian people, and all this disturbance within the Christian church, has been brought about by the growing knowledge on the part of men as a result of this supreme discovery of the ages, and the growing recognition of the universality of natural law—the very fundamental principle of all modern knowledge and of human life. From the days of Humboldt to this the advance of knowledge, and the discovery every day of new laws, have kept even pace until today we know, if we know anything at all, that this vast universe is controlled throughout by unchanging and unchangeable law. There is no remotest corner, from all the immeasurable depths of space, and no briefest fraction of a second in all the unending eons of time, which are subject to disorder, or even momentary interference from without; but all things in the most distant star in the heavens as on this whirling earth, and in the earliest moment of cosmic history as in this latest moment of recorded time, are subject to the unvarying and perfect uniformity of law.

I must go a little into detail properly to impress this truth upon your minds, because it is the most important truth

known to man, being the basis of all knowledge. What does it mean? It means that every sun and moon and star and comet is held and guided by an omnipresent law; even their irregularities can be accounted for and predicted beforehand. The development of the earth from its molten to its inhabitable condition has been under the guidance of a law so perfect that the most remote results might have been predicted from the beginning. The history of the rise and growth and decay of nations is another illustration of law—law which people today, like Spengler, are trying to formulate. The nature of their origins, their elements, and their surroundings have determined their careers and the bounds of their habitation. It matters not that they themselves have not recognized it. The drops of water in a stream do not recognize the current, but one standing on the shore can trace and formulate the law of its whole movement from source to mouth; so as we study the past of humanity we can see that the movements, the wars, the conquests and defeats, were not matters of caprice or chance, but were governed by all determining laws. Even the lowest forms of life tell the same story. Every little flower is the product of conditions so fixed that the size and shape of its stem, the number of its leaves, the shading of its petals, the quality of its odor, could not possibly have been other than what they are. And so the hand of law has wrought for us the millions of varieties of grasses and flowers, and they all are what they are, simply because their whole origin and development lies within the control of law so perfect that they could not in their conditions be otherwise.

The same is true of these forces of nature about us that seem so lawless and uncontrolled. Even the wind, as "it bloweth where it listeth," always listeth to blow in the way appointed it. It has its fixed course from which it cannot stray, and while seeming to loiter about here and there at random, its way is as sure as that of the eddying ripple on the brook's surface. And when the sweeping hurricane drags on through the wild heavens its black car of desolation, it rushes on its appointed way as really as do mountain torrents. So the lightning strikes no uncertain blow; neither do the clouds drift aimlessly in the sky. While apparently

free and wild the fury of the storm is as truly in the hands of law as the lightning flash when bound to the copper wire, bearing regular messages for man. And Mr. Pursell sits in the Federal building, and reviewing the winds and the clouds and the air pressures in various parts of the continent, is able to tell us day by day whether or not we shall need our overcoats and umbrellas; and if occasionally he fails, it is only because his knowledge of the conditions is incomplete or his observations incorrect.

So in our individual lives. There is no part of our being that law does not touch, mould, direct. By unchanging law we make every motion of our bodies; by it we breathe and purify the blood; by it the blood runs through the veins and arteries and repairs nature's waste and wear; by it the heart beats and the brain thinks; the eye drinks in beauty and the ear sounds; it surrounds us and hedges us in on every hand. And this is just as true of thought and feeling, the intellectual and moral realms. Law and order are everywhere the conditions of life, of happiness, of goodness and beauty. Every thought we think is the result of certain causes, and every emotion we experience is a definitely caused reaction. And while the scientific study of behavior is comparatively recent, everything points to the fact that our conduct is the result of action and reaction of well-defined laws, so that if all the circumstances involved could be known human conduct would be as predictable as a solar eclipse.

So, whether we like it or not, it is pretty well settled that we shall have to accept this universal reign of law as a fact. All the knowledge of the world points to it more and more definitely as true. Law and order reign everywhere. Curses do not bring storms and prayers do not avert them. Curses do not make people ill, and prayers do not make them well. Curses do not bring on wars, and prayers do not end them. Storms come and go as the result of well-established laws; disease is the result of well-defined laws of the physical body in its relation to its environment; and wars are the result of well-known laws of social relationship. Every department of the universe has its own laws and conditions, and events are controlled solely by these. Nothing can be done in disregard of these laws.

IV.

Now you see the significance of what Martin Luther said in regard to the law of gravitation—that it meant taking the universe out of the hands of God and putting it in control of law. This is exactly what it does, making the Christian idea of God absolutely impossible, and striking a fatal blow at any kind of theism. It is true that there are people who accept the universality of law and continue to be theists, but such theism is purely for the satisfaction of the mind and not of any practical benefit. Such people say that there is nothing irreconcilable between the thought of God and the thought of the universe as controlled by unvarying law, because this law simply marks the uniform channels of activity into which God is directing the impulses of his creative energy. There are various ways of explaining this relationship. For instance, John Fiske tells us that a natural law is simply the statement of the particular way in which God chooses to act. When we discover the operation of some natural law, as Kepler discovered the law of planetary motion, or Newton the law of gravitation, or Spencer the law of evolution, we are simply discovering the methods by which God has decided to conform his life; and when we formulate these laws into a system and declare that this system marks the uniform procedure of natural forces, we are simply telling the way in which God lives and moves and works. Bergsen comes to the same conclusion, but substitutes the element of compulsion for that of free choice. God, he says, is confronted in his creative work by certain definite conditions of reality, and he finds it necessary to conform to those conditions. In other words, it is the only way in which God could exert himself. This means that natural laws are not laws which were formulated and enacted by a personal being as the best method of working, as implied by Fiske, but rather that they are the natural outcome of the necessities of the case, and are the result, therefore, not of conscious purpose, but of necessity. But note what this does to your theism. It limits God, it binds him hand and foot, it makes it impossible for him to work in any other way, and, therefore, of no practical use whatsoever. This robs the whole idea of God of its original purpose—that of being beneficial to man, and makes the idea

entirely worthless, except as an intellectual conception of the first cause.

The thing I would have you note is this, that since we have made the supreme discovery of the ages—that the universe is controlled by law—we have no more need of God. All we need now is to learn the laws which control the universe and human activity and adjust them to our purposes, or adjust ourselves to them. Perhaps, before I go further, I should explain just what we mean by natural law; for some people cannot understand how we can have law without having a law-maker. But natural laws are not the same type of thing as statute laws—they are merely the expression by man of fixed relations existing between things. In other words, law is not something in itself, it is merely the expression of the results of our observations concerning things. It is an expression of that relation existing between things which leads us to conclude that like causes under like conditions will always, without a single exception, produce like results. In other words, the ways of the universe are constant—that is, in exactly the same circumstances, every action and reaction in the universe is exactly the same. When we learn some of these constant ways, we speak of them as laws. For instance, under certain conditions two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen unite to form a molecule of water. That is a constant relationship, that is, under the same conditions this always takes place, so we call it a chemical law. This does not mean that this relationship was previously and consciously designed. It simply means that the properties of hydrogen and oxygen are of such a nature that this is a natural relationship. So what we call natural laws are the result of our observations of the constancy of nature. And it was the discovery of this fact that constitutes the supreme discovery of the ages because, not only did it make possible all the knowledge of this modern time, but for the first time it has given man the necessary data to control his life and chart his course. In a universe of law we can learn how to live, but in a fickle and inconstant universe we should be lost.

In fact, it is only because we can thus depend upon natural law that life and civilization are possible. It is be-

cause we know that the laws of sunshine and soil and seed and moisture are always and everywhere the same that we are able to plow and sow and reap and harvest, giving food to the whole earth. If these laws controlling the growth of grain were subject to change we would not know how to produce food. It is because we know that the laws of earth and iron are constant that we can build railroads; and because the laws of steam are changeless, we can run our trains upon them. With faith in the unchanging laws of wind and wave, we build and sail our ships all over the globe. The laws of electricity assure us that the wire which today took our message to Chicago will not be useless tomorrow. By the laws of nature we erect our houses and towering office buildings, and lay out the streets of our cities. It is the unchanging law that makes us rest at night, with no fear that it will change before morning, and permit our houses to tumble down about our heads. On our faith in the laws of light we put the glass in our windows, and by our faith in the laws of temperature we are able to heat our houses.

All this is true in social life. It is the stability of the laws of human nature that makes it possible to frame constitutions and establish governments. If humanity were capricious, governments would be impossible. Commerce and business means trust in the general stability of human nature. Crimes and betrayals are only insignificant exceptions. There could be no morality were it not for the constant element in human thinking and human conduct. Were there no law of character, were it the caprice of a self-moved will, how could we ever trust each other? That a man has imperiled his life for virtue today would be no guarantee that he would not commit murder tomorrow. That there is a cosmos at all, a universe in which life and thought and knowledge and progress are possible, is just because of this reign of universal law.

If this law could in the least be disturbed, either by miracle or by prayer, this would, indeed, be a sorry world in which to live. There would be no assurance of anything, and the world would be as undesirable as it would be impossible to live in. We are able to live and work and accom-

plish things just because of the mighty network of cause and effect which cannot be interrupted. Otherwise, the prayer of some pious soul in far-away Asia might upset all the painstaking labor of generations in America. Everything that is done in this world is done just because men depend upon the unchangeableness of natural law. The greatest blessing in the world is to know that a certain cause will always and everywhere produce the same effect. It makes constructive work possible, it makes life possible. Therefore, we have no desire for a being that can deliver us from the law. To deliver my heart from the law would be to make me capricious, as likely to hate as love. To deliver my brain from the law would simply mean insanity. To deliver my body from the law would be disease and death. Whatever lives, lives in, and whatever grows, grows by the law.

And it is the discovery of the universality of this principle that gives promise of undreamed of things in the future. Because of it we can learn the secrets of nature and use them in our own behalf. We can co-operate with and use laws to sustain and ennoble life. We can unravel the mystery of electricity and harness it to turn darkness into light, thereby frustrating the unfavorable laws of nature. We can conquer space by train and automobile and telegraph and radio, and overcome the limitations of our physical powers by the invention of all kinds of machinery. And if too many machines produce an army of unemployment, we can use our knowledge of the laws of birth control to limit the population. We can master disease and destroy microbes by the millions. Nature herself is but clay in the hands of man now that we have made the great discovery. It is marvelous to think what man has done in the way of conquering and controlling nature in the past century; it is bewildering to try to imagine what he will do in the next few centuries. And what he does to nature he can also do to human nature. We can discover the laws of our own being and of our social environment, and eventually control these to our own advantage. Through knowledge of ourselves, of the springs of our conduct, of our relation to our fellows, and of the regulation of human intercourse in the interests of harmony and justice and peace—all of which operate in

accordance with the inexorable laws of cause and effect—we can some day create a world in which life will be happy and free and blessed.

V.

Now let me speak of the effect of this theory upon the life and work of man. When it was believed that this universe was in the arbitrary control of a personal God, then if any one desired a certain thing accomplished he felt naturally under necessity of gaining the favor of God, and by means of prayer or sacrifice inducing him to do it; but now we realize that if we would accomplish anything we must know what the eternal and unchanging laws of cause and effect are, and work in accordance with these laws. For instance, here is a man who has tuberculosis (I want to bring this home in a practical way), and he desires to regain his health, how shall he do it? Under the old system the proper method would be to get down on his knees and pray to God to stay the invasion of the germs and build him new lung cells. But now he will study the laws of health, and learn that the only way to stay the infection and build up new lung cells is to build up his resistance by eating nourishing food, living in the fresh air and the sunshine, taking the proper exercise, with the result that new cell after new cell is created and the unhealthy conditions are sloughed away.

Suppose a farmer wants to raise a successful crop, in recognition of the reign of law, he will not pray for the crop, nor will he expect God to grow it for him in any unusual way. He will find out the laws of soil and seed and culture and comply with them. If a man wishes to fly in the air, he does not pray to God to give him the wings of an angel, he studies the laws of power and air resistance and planes, and builds himself an aeroplane. If a carpenter wishes to build a house, he must find out the laws manifested in the construction of a house, and if he builds it in accordance with them it stands, if not, it falls. Everything that we do, we do by direct co-operation with these eternal changeless laws.

The men who invent new things, simply find out some new way of obeying some particular law, so that they are

able to do something never before done in the world. The men who start certain political or social reforms, must know the laws which operate in these particular realms, and work in harmony with them, if they wish to be successful. I might continue thus to give illustrations, but I have not time and neither is it necessary. Suffice it to say that all success, all progress, all happiness depends upon knowing and co-operating with the laws of the universe, and you will recognize at once the revolution which this works in the life of man.

It means that we no longer depend upon some outside force, but upon ourselves; it means that we transfer our efforts from seeking help from God to seeking help in knowledge of the laws which control this universe; it means that the minds, which have heretofore been occupied with the methods of gaining divine favor, must be occupied with the study of the methods of the universe; it means that the hands, which have heretofore been raised in supplication, must be turned to the tasks about us; it means that man will no longer seek salvation through redemption, but through knowledge; that ceremonial will give way to study; that prayer will be replaced by effort; and when this becomes the very basis of men's religion the happiness and success of humanity will be assured, and no man would dare predict the heights to which it may attain.

What If The World Went Humanist

WHAT would happen if the world went Humanist? That, of course, is a purely hypothetical question, for I have no illusions about the world, at least within my lifetime, giving up what it conceives to be the consolations of theistic religion. I doubt very much if the world will ever become entirely humanistic. No doubt there will always be those who indulge their appetite for God, for finality, for an explanation of the universe which gives them a sense of security, and the happiness which comes from thinking that they are enfolded in "the everlasting arms." It seems that Humanism appeals only to a certain type of mind. Evidently temperament is an important factor in determining which way the individual will look at the universe and regard himself. Time and time again I have talked with theistic thinkers who acknowledge, for the most part, the reasonableness of Humanism, but feel that it is too austere and heroic to be generally accepted. It seems to resolve itself into a question of the degree to which a mentality has become toughened, for apparently Humanism appeals only to the "tough-minded." I know of a number of people who have embraced Humanism, only to decide later that they could not continue. Apparently the mere reasonableness of Humanism is not enough to assure its popular acceptance, and many have not been able to sound the depths of its mystic meaning. Those who are capable of grasping the real significance of the humanistic philosophy, bear witness to the joy and inspiration

which it gives to those who comprehend it. The real Humanist experiences a kind of mystical ecstasy which comes from the conviction of humanity's dependence upon itself. But this is almost entirely lost on those who have adjusted their whole lives to dependence upon a superior power. So it is, indeed, largely a matter of temperament. Logic and consistency have little or nothing to do with it.

The result is that very few of its critics touch the heart of it or understand its reason for being. Some seem to think that it is merely another interpretation of the traditional ideas, leaving out the precious consolations and guarantees which made the earlier ones meaningful. Some interpret it merely as a new form of social service, and therefore nothing different from what a modern theist has. Some would call themselves Humanists and add the adjectives "Christian" or "Evangelical." One critic says it is not humanistic enough because it has not solved all the problems of our tangled social complexity. Some feel that it does not adequately deal with moral values, which is, perhaps, the most serious misunderstanding of all. Some say that it has no motive power to keep men at the task of creative achievement. One critic is sure that it can only be acceptable to the intellectual elite and could never be made comprehensible to the common people. Just last Sunday a local minister, in speaking on Humanism, said it is a religion without love. That is perhaps "the most unkindest cut of all." Unfortunately for the critics, none of these charges strike home, because they show an absolute lack of ability to grasp the real meaning of Humanism. They fail to realize that Humanism is really the attempt to conserve all the human values that humanity in its age-long struggle has built up, and in addition create such new values as will add to the significance of human life on this planet. It is mainly significant, therefore, because it seeks to utilize every agency that may contribute to that end. It frankly and fearlessly comes to terms with reality as learned through scientific inquiry, and prefers to depend upon human loyalties and human intelligence rather than on faith in any unseen fate or supernatural control; it carries the torch of the age-old human quest for the good life

into the midst of the new world of complex civilization; it dares to believe that it is possible to organize the world in such a way as to make material and machines, scientific knowledge and technology serve the higher life of man; and its optimism lies in the fact that it dares to believe that to-day, if man will himself assume the responsibility, it can make that ancient dream come true.

I.

What, then, if the world went Humanist? There are some, even some Humanists, who think it would not be well for every one to be a Humanist. I presume this thought is based upon the feeling that if the restraint of authoritative religion were removed from the masses of people, there would be a dangerous reaction in the form of irreligion, immorality, inhuman activity; in short, that the people have not yet reached the point of human responsibility where they can safely be released from the old restraints of a final authority. That may be true, but that is an entirely different thing from having the world go Humanist. To become a Humanist does not merely mean throwing off the yoke of the old religion; it means assuming personally the responsibility which heretofore was supposed to rest with God. Therefore, if the world actually went Humanist—that is, if all the people should accept the Humanist point of view and attain the Humanist attitude of mind, there could be no possibility of such a reaction. The result would be in the opposite direction.

There are those also who feel that if the world went Humanist it would be disastrous because people would be robbed of comfort and hope. This again implies a misunderstanding. Humanism robs man of nothing that actually exists. It takes from him only his comforting illusions, and substitutes for them consolations that are real and hopes that are realizable. It is true that Humanism calls upon one to give up the comforting thought of the fatherhood of God and the favoritism of a kindly providence; but it substitutes for these the assurance of the inflexible impartiality of immutable law whereby we can control and direct our own lives, and the almost ecstatic

joy that comes from realizing that we are earth children and terminable thrusts of the cosmic life, and from feeling the divine thrill of the shared-life as we strive together toward our common destiny. And as for hope, Humanism may rob man of his dream of Elysian Fields or Walhallas or New Jerusalems, but it substitutes for them the entrancing vision of a better world of human life here upon the good brown earth. Humanism sets before us a great world-hope and pictures a civilization in which man can live the satisfying life. Humanism may take away some of the old comforts, but it offers others more convincing. And after a man has borne the first cold blast which seems to have wrecked his faith and hope, a warm glow suffuses him, and he is heartened by the homey, happy, human relations here on earth, and a vision of the beautiful world which has haunted the minds of men for centuries. Our sojourn here becomes a wonder-awakening romance, a pilgrimage through mysteries and marvels, and as we walk together, comforting each other, inspiring each other, helping each other, loving each other, our hearts burn within us.

II.

Suppose then that the world went Humanist? What the result would be we can only surmise, and no great social change is attended by good consequences alone. Yet it is wonderful to think what might happen if the vast human power which is devoted to theistic religion today were liberated for other and more profitable uses, if all the energy spent in the worship of God were devoted to the service of man. The shadow which has lain across the mind of the race for all the centuries would be lifted. The enormous army of parasitic-priestcraft would be dispersed to useful labors. The golden stream of revenue, which has ever flowed through the doors of temples and cathedrals, would be diverted to the doors of homes and schools. The multitudes of children who, generation after generation, have had their minds filled with ideas that were grotesque and grim and gruesome, would be free to learn the wholesome and the true. The blanket of fear which has filled the hearts of men with terror would be lifted. Instead,

men would become daring and adventurous in their quest for reality. Heaven would cease to beckon and hell to warn, and life would be prized for its present good. It is, indeed, a moving thought that all the energy expended today in importuning the gods should be devoted to the task of improving human life; and that all the dreams about a blessed life in a beautiful world beyond should be concentrated on making this life better and this world more beautiful.

What in detail would take place if the world went Humanist, no one would dare assert. The best he can do is make note of certain general tendencies, and trust that these would work in accordance with expectations; but even here he is treading on dangerous ground, for the future has a disconcerting habit of disappointing expectations. The factors that govern human nature are so many and so complex, their transmutations and combinations are so numerous, that it is well to tread cautiously, and to a very considerable extent leave the future to take care of itself. I have no desire, therefore, to describe precisely what would be the state of society if Humanism became the popular religion. I merely speak of the motives and methods which would prevail if all men actually acquired the Humanist point of view and followed the direction in which it points, and, perhaps, briefly to offer a reply to those gloomy individuals who declare that if the aims of the Humanists were fully realized, that in destroying theism, we would destroy all that makes life worth living. This thought, of course, is due to the fact, not that the idea of God performs a useful function in human life, but that certain human qualities have been identified with it. And the Humanist wishes merely a removal of this idea from the control of life and a restatement of those human qualities that have hitherto been identified with God, so that their real nature will be apparent to us. I refer now, of course, to those human qualities, such as justice and love and mercy, which have been attributed to God, but which are inventions of man.

Suppose, for instance, that we should wake up some morning and find that belief in God had completely disap-

peared, what would be the effect? It would not effect any of the fundamental processes of life. The drama of life would go on very much the same; it would run through the same number of acts and end in the same happy or unhappy manner. Human beings would still be born, they would grow up, they would fall in love, they would marry, they would beget their kind, and they would in turn pass away to make room for another generation. Birth and death, with all their accompanying feelings, would remain. Human society would continue; all the glories of art, the greatness of science, all the marvels and wonders of the universe would be there whether we believed in God or not. The only difference would be that we would no longer associate these things with the existence of a God. And in that respect we should be following the same course of development that has been followed in many other departments of life. We do not nowadays associate the existence of spirits with a good or bad harvest, the anger of God with an epidemic, or the good-will of deity with a pleasant spell of weather. Yet in each case there was once the same assumed association and the same fears of what would happen if that association were discarded. The Humanist is only carrying the process a step farther. In short, there is not a single useful or worthy quality, intellectual or moral, that could possibly suffer by the adoption of Humanism.

Every one of the individual and social virtues is born of human intercourse and can never be seriously deranged for any length of time, so long as human society endures. The scale of values may undergo a change, but that will be to the advantage of humankind. We shall place a higher value upon those qualities that contribute to the good life and a lower value upon others; but there will be no discarding of old qualities and creation of new ones. Human nature will be the same then as now, as it has been for thousands of years. The nature of human qualities will be more directly conceived and more intelligently applied, and that will be an undesirable change only for those who live by exploiting the ignorance and the folly of mankind. For instance, under Humanism, what are known as the ascetic qualities would decrease in value, because its principle

would be, not self-sacrifice, but self-development; and this would result in an enlargement of our conception of justice and of social reform, which occupy a very low place in the Christian scale of virtues. Likewise there would be a rise in the scale of values of what one may call the intellectual virtues—the duty of truth-seeking and truth-speaking. Hitherto the type of character held up for admiration has been that of the blind believer who allowed nothing to stand in the way of his belief, who required no proof of its truth and allowed no disproofs to enter his mind. But in Humanism a very high value will be placed on the duty of investigation and the right of criticism. And one cannot easily over-estimate the consequences of a generation or two brought up in an atmosphere where such teachings obtain. It would mean a receptiveness to new ideas, a readiness to overhaul old institutions, a toleration of criticism such as would rapidly transform the whole mental atmosphere and with it enormously accentuate the capacity for, and the rapidity of, human progress. So Humanism would take the world with all the means of intellectual and aesthetic and social enjoyment that exist now and cultivate them and seek to diffuse them over the whole of society. A world under Humanism would simply be a world in which the sole ends of endeavor would be those of human enlightenment and human betterment.

III.

If the world went Humanist, it would simply mean that mankind had settled down to the job of living, of wresting from human life the satisfactions which man desires, by bringing to bear upon the situation all the intelligence and effort that he can command, without any expectation of outside help. Man would immediately discard all the fantastic theories that he has woven about the universe and see it as revealed by modern science. He would realize that this little planet, on which we live, is almost lost in our solar system with its thousands of millions of miles of space; and that this solar system is merely a point of light in the vast depths of the stars which form our universe; and that beyond our universe are others, universe beyond

universe, on to unimaginable depths of space. Yet here on this little, tiny, lost world man is battling for life, trying by co-operative effort to build a home, a satisfying beautiful home for the "Children of Earth," striving in spite of many defeats to entrench himself in a world indifferent to the things he regards worthful. And if the world went Humanist, it would simply mean that man had settled down to his job—his job being the conquest of this planet as a habitation for man, the discovery and utilization of nature's boundless powers, the working out of the difficult problems of personal, group, international and racial problems, the reconstruction of civilization, the provision of a favorable earth environment for the generations of the future, the adjustment of individual appetites and tendencies and urges to social well-being.

Humanism means the realization of racial destiny, the general agreement that we shall all work together to make the best of the human situation. We are all in the same fix, all in life's predicament, all confronted with insoluble problems, unanswerable questions, unrealized ideals. We all have a common origin, a common purpose, a common destiny. Here we are on this planet, enveloped and penetrated by mysterious forces, endowed with astonishing powers, equipped with an intelligence that enables us to remember our past and plan our future. How we came here may be interesting, but it is not highly important. Where we go from here, if anywhere, is also interesting to speculate upon, but it is merely an amusement for leisure moments. Humanity is here, and humanity must make the best of it. We are so sensitively related to each other that we can make each other miserable, adding to the hardships which existence already involves. On the other hand, we can ameliorate those hardships, co-operate with nature and with one another, gradually discover and chart the paths to happiness, mark the danger points for those who follow, become more and more at home in the universe and more and more expert in dealing with our fellow human beings, and more and more approach the ideal of a satisfactory, human society.

We are precisely like a group of men and women isolated on an island in the Pacific who, instead of dreaming of what

they would do if they ever escaped, set to work in the endeavor to make the place habitable and living comfortable. There are trees to be felled, clearings to be made, stumps to be pulled, soil to be cultivated, houses to be built, grain to be reaped, children to be cared for, sickness to be cured, justice to be provided. The human family has the same task on a magnified and vastly more complicated scale. The recognition that such is the case and the hearty turning to it is all there is to Humanism. The results of such a venture are difficult to predict. About all one can do is try to imagine what results would follow if mankind, as a whole, sought to make the greatest use of all education, all advance in science, all beneficial forms of social organization, all art and music, all well-grounded ethics—all that informs, refines, strengthens and ennobles human character. Again, one cannot predict the outcome of a humanistic world, because Humanism has no fixed fantastic objective. It follows a flying goal. It simply clears the mind and simplifies life at one stroke by the abandonment of the hope of divine aid or the fear of divine judgment. It would simply set humanity to work in humanity's interest, and not in the interest of some superior being or in the interest of some other life. It would simply mean that the whole of mankind had agreed to work under the banner which reads, "A better world for better people through better co-operation."

IV.

I presume the only way we can faintly surmise what would happen if the world went Humanist is to consider the probable results of the application of some of the principles of Humanism. For instance, the very basic foundation of Humanism is the insistence that man is an end and not a means toward something else, not a mere instrument to some other end unrelated to himself. Therefore, if the world went Humanist it would mean that immediately all men would begin to treat themselves, and all others, never merely as means, but as ends in themselves. We can picture the results of this only by contemplating the extent to which men are treated as means today. In practically every religious scheme men are considered only

means to the glorification and service of God; therefore, the ideology of religion would immediately become man-centered instead of God-centered. In our whole industrial scheme today men are thought of as means only to the end of production with its resulting profits, with the result that human life has been subservient to property. So if the world went Humanist, our industry would immediately change this whole idea making human life the end, and production only the means to the enrichment of human life. In our international relations men are considered only means and are gathered up and hurled into battle by governments who have economic interests to protect or nationalistic aims to further. In family life, the rights and happiness of various members are frequently considered but means to the selfish interests of the head of the house whether male or female. In fact, most of the age-old brutalities of history, as well as the cruelties and foul-play of the present time, are but examples of human beings using others as means to carry out their purposes and designs. All this would be reversed if the world went Humanist.

And our whole new social system would be built around this idea. Every institution which now exists would be placed under the closest scrutiny to determine whether or not it is making a real contribution to human life, and if not, they would have to give way to institutions which did. This means an entire reconstruction of the ideology of our industrial system. Look at the present hour. The need of the world for all kinds of goods is just as great and imperative as it ever was. Millions of human beings are crying out for food and clothing, and the nations of the earth are in just as great a need of commodities—what strange reasoning is it that tells us people must be out of work? Why are mills shutting down and plants closing, so that today in this country there are millions of people out of work, while worse conditions prevail in other countries? At this moment we have all the factories and mines, all the machinery for production and distribution; some people need the goods, others need the work. What explains this strange situation? The simple fact that our whole industrial system is built around the idea of property instead

of human life. Our captains of industry will not embark on new enterprises, will not set the wheels going until they are convinced that by so doing they will make profits. The first thought is, will it pay in dollars—and this to the exclusion of what it does to human life. I am not claiming now that this action is not justified by the system; I am simply trying to show that under the present system the question of human needs is not the primary consideration, whereas it would be if the world were Humanist.

Again, tremendous strides would take place through the study and application of science to human life; because the Humanist would immediately substitute human inquiry for divine revelation as the means of finding truth and understanding human experience. Instead of reading supposed divine books and bowing before priests, all people would then investigate facts, verify these facts, and formulate hypotheses which the facts suggest. Thus the scientific method would become universal, and when one stops to think of the tremendous advances made by science in the last generation, we can only faintly conceive of the possibilities which lie ahead; because this humanistic method has added more to the sum total of knowledge in the last century than the old method added in a hundred centuries. It is only within the last few years that we have gained any real knowledge about ourselves and the world in which we live. And as this knowledge increases and becomes potent in the lives of the many, it will sweep the race along to higher and higher levels, to mounts of achievement that are beyond our view. One cannot possibly conceive of the benefits to human kind once we use all the natural sciences for the understanding and the control of our environment, and when we use all the human sciences for the guidance and control of human behavior.

For you must remember that Humanism is the effort to enrich human experience to the utmost capacity of man and of his environment by bringing to bear upon it all the intelligence we can command. Therefore, in a Humanist world every man would regard as a sacred obligation the study of the biological, psychological, economic and social factors that make for the ruin or salvation of mankind. This

means that eventually the economists, with the co-operation of socially minded people, would establish a world-wide balance of production and consumption, thus eliminating poverty and the crimes of cupidity. It means that we would do away with the competition for world markets and over-population through unrestricted breeding, and usher in the era of universal peace. It means that by the practise of eugenics and intelligent birth control, we would eventually solve many of the perplexing problems—such as unemployment, immigration, community health, slum congestion and crime. It means, also, that by the practise of euthenics, we would bring all these sciences to bear upon the development of healthy, sane, noble individuals, and the arrangement of a social situation in which each would have the opportunity of living the free and full life.

In short, if the world went Humanist, all the immense fortunes that have thus far been swallowed up in the engulfing crater of war and the billions of dollars now being spent in preparation for the next war would be expended in the intensification of agriculture, the building of roads and waterways, municipal projects, and all that goes to improve living conditions. Men would no longer die before their time nor suffer much while living, because every child brought into the world would be well-born. We would have conquered the forces of disease, and workmen would be adequately protected by safety devices. Science would give us further mastery over the forces of nature. Gradual reorganization of our economic system would ameliorate life and release our energies more completely for the higher values. Education would reduce our ignorance and our fears, making of us creative and daring spirits. Ethics would show us more and more clearly the paths of right conduct. And thus with ignorance and superstition and cruelty and vice giving way to intelligence and justice and love, the people of the earth would dwell together in this the earth home, enjoying the fruits of their labor in equity, governed by the law of good will and mutual consideration.

Again, if the world went Humanist, there would be immediate recognition of the essential unity of mankind. We would realize that there flows through the whole human

race, from the lowest to the highest, one life and one blood, that we have a common life and a common interest, and we would all march on together toward our common purpose and common ideal, realizing that what hurts one hurts all. This would mean the elimination of all racial antagonisms, national jealousies, class struggles, religious prejudices and individual hatreds. All these would dissolve in the realization of human solidarity, in which each person considers himself a co-operative part of the whole, striving toward a commonwealth of man, built upon the principles of good will and service. This would mean a co-ordination and synthesis of all our knowledge and powers in the interest of the common good, as well as a mystic joy from consciousness of the shared life with others whose interests and destiny are bound up with our own.

In addition, men, if the world went Humanist, would have a much deeper sense of personal responsibility for the conditions of human life and rely upon human effort for their improvement. Bereft of expecting any help from God or any other outside source, men themselves would shoulder the responsibility for the present miserable conditions of human life and set to work immediately to improve them. We would then realize that the situation is in our hands, and that practically all, some sociologists have estimated ninety-five per cent, of the evils of the world have been brought upon men by themselves. We would then frankly assume the responsibility for all these evils and know that we ourselves must eradicate them and build the better world. Finding no other place of responsibility than human shoulders, and no other hope of improvement than human effort, the tremendous responsibility of the situation would dawn upon us; and we would look straight into the face of the world and of human life, see its good and its bad, and expecting no help from without, determine to make the world a fit place in which to live and human life worth living. Heretofore our responsibility has been weakened by the invention of comforting philosophies of escape and our reliance upon supernatural aid. We would then try to see things as they really are. Alone in a terrifying and uncaring universe, we would seek to create and sustain

whatever can make human life worth while. We would see our lives as very insecure upon this little planet as it swings through space, and realize that upon us rests the hard and glorious task of deepening and enriching them.

V.

Perhaps I can give you a picture of what I have in mind by reference to two recent pieces of literature—one illustrating the spirit of Humanism and the other its possibilities. The first is a drama, entitled, *The World We Live In*, by the Czechoslovakian brothers, Capek, which was produced in this country a few years ago. In it was a series of scenes depicting different phases of modern civilization. In the last scene, the "Vagabond" attempts to sum up the meaning of it all. In substance he says: Here we all are in the world—races, nations, classes, individuals, all striving for the same thing—the struggle for existence. We are all reaching out for the richer, fuller, more satisfying life. But is it not strange that while we are all striving for the same thing, we are all striving against each other; we are hurting, weakening, wounding, maiming, killing one another? After a pause he resumed: "Why can we not strive together for that richer and fuller life? Why can we not as races, as nations, as classes, as individuals, stand shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart, and strive *together* against death in every form—physical death from disease and pestilence, mental death from ignorance and superstition, moral death from vice and crime? Why can we not *together* strive for all that makes for the richer, fuller happier life for all men everywhere?" The great word of Humanism is that one word—*together*. In just the measure that we can find something of ourselves in all others, and something of all others in ourselves, will we come to share the spirit of Humanism, and thus become potent influences in the realization of this new ideal.

The other book I have in mind is Mr. Well's novel entitled, *Men like Gods*. In this he sketches an earth, a humanity, three thousand years older than ours. Men and women are like gods, nude and splendid divinities. They are not toys of mightier forces; the greatest forces we know

are their toys. They are not slaves to some overpowering deity—all the energies of the universe are their slaves for the embellishment of life. These men and women have mastered themselves, mastered the problems of social life, mastered the secrets and processes of the universe. And they have used the new wisdom and power to make life beautiful and happy for all. You may smile at Mr. Well's Utopianism, but he will not mind. He is insisting on a great, broad truth. It is this: We humans have as yet opened only the most superficial reservoirs of the earth's resources. We have as yet only a tithe of the wisdom we could acquire. We can, if we will, make this earth a bright, beautiful, healthy, rich, glorious home, with none but the little inevitable tragedies of individual hearts to ripple its smooth surface occasionally, with fullness of life and strength and joy for every man and woman. We can transform the multitudes of pale, dull-eyed folk condemned to stunted minds and coarse tastes into Ruskin's "Full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted creatures." That is Well's idea. Burn that one truth—that it can be done—into the mind of the race, and the work will begin.

Thus, when the world goes Humanist, we may have lost God, but we will have discovered man. We never knew ourselves before. We never knew what power and wealth we had—potentially. We never thought of developing it. Most of us have still not the least idea of such a thing. People are still thoughtless, engaged in the daily occupation of "enjoying themselves" with long hours of boredom, but few hours devoted to that grim exercise—thinking. What a terrible distance the race has still to go; but if the world goes Humanist—thinking will fill and transform those hours of boredom. Then the work of creation will begin; and in the light of a vision of a better earth, in the thrilling consciousness of a new and mighty power, in a glorious liberty of mind and heart, men and women will lay the foundations of the civilization that is to come. Then men will make a science of the life and resources of humanity on this planet, and will organize it as men organized a great business, so that the work of the world will be properly distributed and alternate happily with the play of the world; instead of

drifting into situations and muddling through them, they will analyze every problem and solve it to their satisfaction. They will act as if there were no heaven, and the one chance of happiness they have is while the heart beats. They will all be apostles of the social spirit until a sound standard of conduct rules the world. Then the altars and temples that have so poorly served our fathers will mingle with the ruins of the temples of Jupiter and Osiris, for men will have discovered the secret of life—that they themselves must do the things they crave, and that they who created the kingdom of God in heaven can create the commonwealth of man on earth.

The Ethics of Birth Control

WE are in the midst today of a renewed interest in an old subject, for while the birth control movement in its modern phase is comparatively recent, the methods which it advocates have been practiced by large numbers of people for many generations; and the general principle which underlies it—that of controlling the birth rate—has been a basis of social morality since the days of primitive man, whether practised in the form of infanticide or of celibacy. The more or less modern method of controlling the birth rate by means of contraception has long been practised by well-informed people, usually by those people who argue most vehemently against it, and the present-day agitation is merely in the interest of a general rather than a discriminating dissemination of contraceptive knowledge, and is launched against certain obsolete legislation which can be called in to prevent the spread of this information. As in other instances, the result is that the information is available to those who need it least and kept from those who are in dreadful need of it—and this is true not only from the standpoint of individual suffering, but what is perhaps more important, from the standpoint of race improvement or deterioration.

The movement began a number of years ago under the name of "Voluntary Parenthood," but was given the now popular term, "Birth Control" by the real founder of the movement and its greatest apostle, Margaret Sanger. While the movement today has many phases and is prescribed as the cure for many social ills, it was started solely to relieve

the women of the poorer classes from the tremendous suffering which resulted from almost constant and unwanted pregnancy. Mrs. Sanger was a nurse in a maternity hospital, where she came in contact with so much grief of this kind that she started her warfare for the emancipation of women from involuntary parenthood, and from that day until this, she has worked and fought and suffered in her zeal to help her unfortunate sisters. Since then a great many other problems have become involved; such as, the problem of population with all that it suggests, the problem of race improvement, the problem of child opportunity, and many others, as well as that of suffering motherhood; so that it has become one of the fundamental factors in connection with every kind of social reform.

The result is that it is considered one of the major movements in every social program today. Books, pamphlets and articles, dealing with the social and economic aspects of birth control, have been written in considerable numbers. Medical journals have begun to touch on the physiological aspects of the practise, and today even our popular magazines use it as a topic which deserves discussion. With the exception of the Catholic church, it is even being advocated now by many Christian ministers. In short, the subject is rapidly being brought out into the open, and it no longer requires any special courage to speak or write on birth control. We owe this change of attitude almost entirely to that brave woman, the pioneer of the movement in this country, Margaret Sanger, who has fought so courageously and suffered so much persecution, including imprisonment. Her career has been one of the most picturesque in the history of reform movements, and I have no doubt that it will be crowned in the near future with the success which it deserves.

I am concerned this morning principally with the ethical aspects of the movement—a phase which is not so frequently discussed, but which should be of interest to a group that stresses the ethical foundation and moral interpretation of all problems. The subject is usually discussed from the sociological and economic points of view, but ethically minded people are much concerned as to its

moral evaluation; and certain conditions, not always mentioned even in a careful treatment of the social and economic problems involved, must be our guide in any attempt to evaluate the ethical ideals and conduct of life with which this movement is connected. While the social and economic and moral aspects of the problem are more or less intertwined, I shall dwell very briefly on those phases which might definitely be considered ethical.

I

The first thing, of course, is to understand what we mean by morality; and here we use our humanistic interpretation of morality, which, by the way, has been the interpretation of all the best philosophers and thinkers and ethical teachers of the ages. Morality, in its true sense, is simply the accepted rule of social conduct—the measure of right conduct between individuals in their social relations. All actions which promote the well-being and happiness of society, or of any individuals, which are the units of society, are moral. On the other hand, every act is immoral which needlessly injures any fellow creature or which tends to the deterioration of our social life. All immoral conduct is anti-social, and all anti-social conduct is immoral. It should be remembered also that moral standards are evolutionary, and change from time to time, and often completely reverse themselves. For instance, less than a hundred years ago, chattel slavery was considered moral, and those who fought it were denounced by the established institutions of their time. During the Middle ages, money lenders for interest were reproached as immoral, while today it is possible for even a banker to be a leading member of the community. Polygamy in different ages was generally accepted as moral. King Solomon was not only the most married man of his time, but was considered the wisest and the best. Today, with a thousand wives, he would be considered not only decidedly immoral, but positively unwise. The moral code has changed. And so, while under certain conditions the old command to be “fruitful and multiply” may have been socially beneficial, it is quite possible under changed conditions that this same command becomes shockingly immoral.

With our definition of morality, the moral and ethical standard of any human agency must be judged by its effects on society in the present conditions, and not by the effects in a previous condition of society. If the results are for the positive good of society, then it is a moral agency; while if the results are socially evil, then it is an immoral agency. And it is on this basis that birth control stands justified or condemned. Therefore, in order to evaluate the practice ethically, we must determine the effect it is having on human life—are conditions better or worse as a result of it? Before we do this, we must recognize the historic fact that all forms of social control—that is, ethics—have dealt very definitely with sex-relationships and parenthood. Many ancient ethical systems began and ended with these important functions, and they have always been intimately associated with the population problem. When the social need was consciously for an increase of population, the moral code placed emphasis on the personal duty of begetting many children; whereas, when it was to the disadvantage of the group to multiply rapidly, the ethical code prescribed that new-born children be put to death. As in all other departments of social control, religion was called in to give supreme sanction to actions understood to be socially useful. Hence, when enemies pressed close and must be conquered by many fighters, and when, therefore, numbers meant more than quality in population, the command, "Be fruitful and multiply," became a chief ethical and religious rule of life. On the other hand, when there was no danger of enemies and the subsistence was limited, it became the ethical and religious duty of the mother to cast her new baby to the crocodiles.

Now during the long period of Christian history, the emphasis has been laid on quantity so that unlimited child bearing became the mark of duty for the social group and for the supreme object of worship. From this social ideal, continued for many centuries, came the deep-set feeling that "God sends children" and hence all must be welcome, no matter what the conditions that await them in the home or in the group environment. Even though most of them died as infants, they could still be used to populate

heaven or hell, according to whether or not the sacrament of baptism had been performed. This is the basis of the greatest opposition to birth control, which, as you know, is found within the Catholic church. Whatever the motives of that church may be, and I have no time to discuss them this morning, it uses this argument to hold its people in line, very clearly set forth in a recent statement of Cardinal Hayes. Here is what he says: "Children troop down from heaven because God wills it. . . . He blesses at will some homes with many, others with few or none at all. They come in the one way ordained by his wisdom. Woe to those who degrade, pervert or do violence to the law of nature as fixed by the eternal decree of God himself. Even though some little angels in the flesh, through the moral, mental or physical deformity of the parents, may appear to the eye hideous, misshaped, a blot on civilized society, we must not lose sight of this Christian thought, that under and within this visible malformation there lives an immortal soul to be saved and glorified for all eternity among the blessed in Heaven." Inasmuch as this idea still prevails in the strongest organized Christian group, and is vigorously taught by a large group of priests who themselves refuse to accept the responsibility of parenthood, the first ethical consideration in this movement as in every other, is the clearing of the ground of inherited so-called divine commands, which prevent free and intelligent study of actual life and of modern conditions relating to the family. Before leaving this phase of the subject, it should be said that, in spite of the teachings of the church, statistics show that intelligent Catholics practice birth control in about the same proportion as people of similar intelligence in other denominations. Their attitude is well illustrated by the remark of the woman, who said: "Sure and I practice birth control, and nobody is going to stop me. The priests who argue against it don't have to bear the kids."

II

In order to get at the ethics of birth control, it is necessary to visualize the social effects of its practice. If we believe that things are right or wrong, according to whether the results are good or bad, then we must look at the re-

sults of the practice of birth control. We must see what good it may foster or what evil it may prevent. There is an interesting article in the current number of the *Outlook*, entitled, "Birth Control or War," in which the author pictures these two things as the inevitable alternative, and insists that even though birth control be considered immoral, the alternative is tremendously more immoral, and we must choose the lesser of two evils. He shows how the birth rate was fundamentally the cause of the Great War, and also how the birth rate, and the attitude toward it, in such countries as Italy and Japan today, are driving us toward another great catastrophe. To prevent this would surely be a moral consideration.

But this brings me to this question of population and the ethical attitude toward it, which I believe suggests the need of some intelligent control. In all the lower forms of existence, life is most prolific. This was necessary because in these forms there is a terrific death rate, and only a small percentage survive. In the higher forms, life is less prolific, because here the parents bestow greater care upon their offspring and a much larger proportion are brought to maturity. Thus there is a law of life—the higher the birth rate, the higher the death rate. This is true not only in the lower forms of life, but in nations, in cities, and in families. The birth rate, therefore, is not the all important thing. The death rate must always be considered in connection with it. The percentage of survival is the important consideration. Now the birth rate and the death rate were pretty well balanced in the human race until recently. Infantile death, pestilence and war took care of the excess population; but by means of scientific achievement we have greatly reduced the death of infants, we have practically wiped out the pestilences which previously swept away entire populations, and we are hoping to eliminate war. The result is that if we insist upon lowering the death rate we must also lower the birth rate. Otherwise, we are headed for disaster.

I have no desire to quote statistics nor enter into controversy over this population question; but it must be obvious that since the world adds 20,000,000 to its population

every year, and since the need of people as the result of machines has been greatly reduced, the time will come when scarcity of food and lack of employment will bring only distress and disaster to multitudes of people. An abundance of cheap labor would keep down wages, the standard of life will be lowered, and social and economic disasters will follow. These conditions are true now in the over-crowded countries. The pressure of these over-populated countries will be resisted by those where living conditions are better, and then the big battallions will give rise to international strife and warfare. Domestic happiness, national prosperity and international peace can only prevail where the birth rate is under intelligent control and is regulated according to the needs and circumstances of the times.

Not only is the quantity of our human stock important, but even more so is its quality. Most hazardous is the haphazard way in which the population increases. While our better stock is practising birth control, we deny it to the great masses, which include the insane, feeble-minded, criminals, paupers, and the general mass of human wreckage. All of these defectives are on the increase, and this group is reproducing itself twice as fast as the normal family. Every welfare movement finds in this group its most hopeless material. Many of these are beyond all reasonable hope of salvage. They cannot give their offspring the proper mental or physical inheritance. They cannot give them a normal environment, and they are incapable of giving them proper guidance and training. It is quite generally conceded that something must be done to discourage indiscriminate breeding in this class. What is to become of the race if we breed twice as fast from our poorest as from our best stock? It can only mean physical, mental, and moral decay. This is a question not only for the biologist, but for every citizen who is interested in perpetuating those traits and qualities that make human life worth while. It is, therefore, a supreme question for the moralist. An intelligent regulation of the birth rate is necessary, not only to enable us to retain our moral standards, but to maintain those human values which the race in its long struggle for a satisfactory life has built up. Surely this is a moral problem.

Then too, the lives and health of mothers and children are involved in this matter. Last week Mrs. Sanger told us that over 26,000 mothers die of child birth in the United States every year, and that most of these deaths are preventable. A large number of them are due to conditions which existed before maternity was undertaken, to certain diseases which had so lowered the vitality that pregnancy was practically a death-warrant. In the interest of those tens of thousands of mothers, resulting in broken homes and little orphans, it is essential that satisfactory methods of birth control be available, so that mothers may be protected against pregnancy under such tragic circumstances. In this connection, it should be added that lack of contraceptive information produces the appalling misery which results from abortions. Desperate and distracted women, knowing only too well their inability to bear and care for another child, submit to the perilous but only hope of relief in abortion. Appalling as it may seem, it is conservatively estimated by an investigating committee that more than one-third of all pregnancies throughout the country end in abortion. This means that 250,000 abortions are performed every year in this country, and a noted authority estimates that probably 50,000 deaths result therefrom. Then think of the thousands of women, married and unmarried, who have not died, but have become chronic invalids as a result of having resorted to abortive measures in order to rid themselves of an unwelcome child. All this might be prevented by the intelligent spread of contraceptive knowledge to those who need it. Is no moral problem involved here?

When we come to the children, there are certain rights to which they are entitled, and to which parents are morally obligated to give them. For instance, every child has a right to be wanted. It has a right to a normal mind in a strong body and a reasonable amount of parental companionship and guidance. It has a right to a normal home in which to grow naturally and learn the fundamentals of morality and social order. It has a right to a chance for an education which will equip it for the affairs of life. It is a terrible injustice to a child that it should be brought into the world when conditions are unfavorable to its best

interests. What moralist will defend the morality that fosters the indiscriminate breeding of children, who are doomed even before they are born? Physically and mentally and morally they are handicapped from birth, and cannot become normal members of human society. In countless numbers, they become inevitably, and through no fault of their own, the social scum that pollute the streets and that make up the life of the underworld; that fill the jails, reformatories and asylums; that crowd the pool rooms and cheap dance halls and brothels; that swell the ranks of prostitution and make up the army of child laborers. As Owen Lovejoy says, "Large families, poverty and lack of schooling go hand in hand. It is in this way that the circle of poverty, ignorance and child labor continues unbroken from generation to generation." What is the program of the moralists who condemn the rational morality that would almost immediately relieve this condition, and ultimately make it impossible? Rational morality requires that children be born by choice under favorable conditions and not by chance under unfortunate circumstances.

This applies equally to families less unfortunate than those I have just treated. Since the procreative possibilities of most persons exceed their earning capacity, thousands of respectable and well intentioned young people, through lack of contraceptive knowledge, are forced into lower standards of living and deprived of the joys which a well regulated family might bring. If this matter is under control, they can maintain a higher standard of living and provide better for their children as well as enjoy them more than they can if children come indiscriminately. A common situation today is a family with a limited income which, with the exercise of economy, will barely provide for, let us say, two children. If the family continues to grow, it means poorer and more cramped quarters, scantier and less suitable clothing, cheaper and less nourishing food. This is unfortunate for both children and parents—the children are forced into gainful occupations at the earliest possible age, and the parents live in a constant gloom as a result of their inability to provide for them as they desire. A sane morality suggests that children should only come when their arrival

brings enrichment to the parents' lives and not debt and despondency.

III

Then, too, think of what birth control might do as an aid to individual happiness in the marriage relations, as a promoter of conjugal tranquility and satisfaction. Think of the sexual inhibitions which must be practiced by the provident young couple, who have hanging over their heads the constant fear of another child which they do not want. Any one with the faintest idea of the potency and deep-rooted nature of sex life can realize the tragedies that are bound up in this dilemma. On the one hand a fearful and despondent woman, and on the other a man, discouraged and hopeless, but with a normally developed sex consciousness, implanted by nature, which is demanding expression. What is the remedy for this domestic calamity? There is only one that is satisfactory—contraceptive information, amplified by a general knowledge of sex psychology and physiology. There are, of course, those who advocate continence in marriage, or what they call self-control. A beautiful ideal, but we must deal with the world as we find it. And while it may be practised by people of certain temperaments, it is neither possible nor desirable for the great majority.

People who advocate this seem to forget that once the family limit is reached, which is likely to come at a very early age, it means total abstinence for the rest of their married life, since one union is sufficient to cause the direful results. Not only does this bring marital discord and disaffection, but it is likely to result more disastrously. Where there is no sex harmony and understanding, and added to this the fear of pregnancy, the husband frequently resorts to prostitution—the choice ranging from the common prostitute to the kept mistress. Thus, it is that the want of sex knowledge in general, and contraceptive information in particular, makes a travesty of marriage and helps to feed the social cancer of prostitution. In numberless instances of this kind, knowledge of birth control methods would save the matrimonial ship from floundering on the rocks of sexual ignorance and morbidity. With this information, vital facts

of sex life are learned and a new and healthy attitude on the whole subject is approached.

Granting that the primary object of the sex instinct is to procreate, it is nevertheless a very evident fact that there is a secondary function in the sex relationship which is essential to the harmony and success of married life under modern conditions, and which acts as an inspiring stimulus to a finer spiritual development as well as the physical well-being of those so mated. This whole dual nature of the sex relation is so forcefully and yet so beautifully treated by that greatest student of sexology, Havelock Ellis, in his many books, but especially in his short treatises on *The Art of Love* and on *The Objects of Marriage* that there is scarcely any reason for misunderstanding today. He would have men and women use the experience of sex, not merely to procreate the race, but also to express the devotion that binds them to one another. He would make of it a sacrament between two souls who have no thought of children. It is only thus that the true depths of married life can be sounded; and so a true spiritual marriage, expressed in the physical act of union, is possible only with birth control information.

These are merely some of a great many reasons why I advocate birth control as a highly moral agency. It must be remembered that birth control is not mandatory. No one is trying to force it upon people. It is merely seeking to lift the ban from the right to give information where it is desired and needed. Today there are laws, both federal and state, which prevent this. These laws are no more obeyed than the prohibition law. Yet they have been successful in withholding contraceptive knowledge from the masses and in limiting the privileged classes to bootlegged products, which to my mind is a disastrous state of affairs. That is the situation the birth control movement is trying to correct. It does not preach that families should be either large or small, but that children should come by choice and not by chance. It does not force its doctrines upon any one; although I am thoroughly convinced that it should not only bring its information to those who already want it, but that we should educate the mass of people in the principle that

birth control is essential to the welfare, not only of both parents and children, but of the whole human race. And in connection with this I believe that we should also educate our better stock in the principle that the future of the race could be immeasurably improved if they were a little more willing to assume the responsibilities of parenthood, especially where they can afford it. Birth control is in the interest of a larger and better life. It is brought about by the prevention of conception, and never by the interference with life once that has begun. It is intended to prevent the tremendous human wastage which follows the indiscriminate bearing of children. It is based absolutely upon the recognition of the value of human life. It seeks to make it possible that life shall only come into being at such times and under such circumstances as afford the best possible chance for its development, success, and happiness.

IV

In order to complete this treatment, though I must be very brief, it is necessary to mention several of the more important objections which the moralists of the old school bring against birth control. Most of these can be treated very briefly. Discussions of the moral aspects of birth control bring forth some odd contentions. For instance, it is maintained that the result would be racial deterioration, because the opportunity of producing genius is restricted. Suppose, for instance, that the parents of Beethoven or Darwin or Abraham Lincoln had practised birth control. This objection is effectively answered by noting where its logic would lead. Some of the greatest minds of all time were born out of wedlock, yet I doubt if these people would advocate promiscuous sex relations in order to produce genius.

It is claimed also that if the practice became universal, women would no longer bear children and the race would eventually die out. There is no danger of this whatever. The instinct of motherhood and the actual desire of most women for children under favorable circumstances will take care of this, while those countries which have long practised it prove that the fear is groundless. It is also maintained that the use of contraceptives is dangerous, especially to

women. The best statistics available show that this is absolutely untrue; that the only dangerous methods are those resorted to by women who have been denied information about scientific and safe methods; so what danger there is lies in the present restriction on birth control knowledge given by competent experts.

There are those who look upon it as destruction of life, but you cannot destroy that which does not exist. Its purpose is to prevent the existence of life. Most of you attended the splendid lecture given at the Center sometime ago by Dr. Scammon on Embryology. He showed very definitely when life begins as the result of the union of the sperm and germ cells. Before they unite there is no human life. If I may use an analogy, the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, in parts two to one, forms water; but if you prevent hydrogen and oxygen from combining in these proportions, you do not destroy any water. You merely prevent water from being formed. In fact, the proper use of contraceptives would prevent the wanton destruction of life, to which I referred a moment ago when speaking of abortions.

The two major objections are found in the statements that it is unnatural—a thwarting of natural law, and that it would lead to sexual immorality. To these I must give a moment's attention. No one denies that it is unnatural; but so is our whole life unnatural. We could not now live under natural conditions, at least we should not want to. Electric lights are unnatural, so are steam heated houses, tooth brushes and safety razors. Why will a man speak of birth control as unnatural and use a safety razor? If anything is obvious, it is that nature intended men to wear long hair and beards. Why thwart nature by cutting them off? Why interfere with nature and undergo a surgical operation? Our civilization is not built on the methods of nature. If it were, we should leave the weak and helpless and old to die, and follow blindly the natural law of the survival of the fittest. But we do not do this because we have learned to control nature, and now that we have learned to control reproduction, this too must give way to science and reason and regulation in the interests of human

welfare. It is the glory and measure of our civilization that we are continually improving on the conditions of a blind and bungling nature; and birth control is just one more step in that directing of his conscious life and his environment which is the most notable distinction of the human as contrasted with the animal; and it is necessary if we are to adjust ourselves to the ever changing circumstances of human progress.

The major argument, however, against birth control is that such information may be used by women not entitled to it, and that it would encourage immorality, especially among unmarried people. No one doubts this to some extent. Knowledge is power, and power can always be abused. That is no reason for keeping people ignorant. It is much better to give them the knowledge, and at the same time train them how to use it. All privileges and human benefits are abused, but the good derived from them far outweighs their abuses. To say that if birth control methods were available, single women would rush in great numbers into promiscuous sex conduct is to say that womanly virtue is only a sham, and that women are virtuous only because of a fear of the consequences of their acts, and not because of moral integrity. This is an insult to the womanhood of the world, and there is not the slightest evidence to justify it. It forgets that people may be controlled by self-respect, as well as by fear; and that there is no ethical quality attached to conduct inspired by fear of consequences. No doubt some are restrained by such fear, but most people are good for better reasons. Our standards of sex morals are influenced by many more subtle motives, and only through proper education and better understanding can we build up permanent high standards in the relations of the sexes. The evils resulting from knowledge can never equal the evils of ignorance. And the evils of neither are so great as the present obscurantist attitude with its repressive measures. Suppression is only befuddling the situation, driving it underground, preventing healthy and normal ethical teaching about it, and the longer suppression continues, the worse the situation is going to be.

Of course, the best proof of all these arguments would be to point to a country where contraceptive knowledge has

been available to all classes, and show that the desired results have followed. This can easily be done in the case of Holland. Since 1881 birth control knowledge has been freely spread in this little country, and the results have been remarkable. In point of natural resources, it is the poorest country in the world, and yet it is the most prosperous of the small countries, and it presents the striking fact of having the best balanced birth rate and death rate in the world. Its stock has been improved both physically and mentally. It was one of the few countries which found no reason for engaging in the suicidal mania of a few years ago, and while hedged around by people who were fighting each other for food supplies, it was quietly supporting itself and helping to feed its neighbors. Poverty is there reduced to a minimum; there are very few divorces; practically no abortions. Crime is almost unknown, and prostitutes are hard to find, except foreign ones who are there to supply the tourist trade. Men and women are contented in their family life, and there is probably less sex promiscuity among young unmarried people than anywhere else in the world. It would no doubt be unfair to say that the condition is solely due to birth control, but we may be sure that birth control has made a large contribution to the fine economic and moral condition of Holland today.

If all this be true, why is it impossible to repeal the laws which forbid this information? For instance, last week I wrote Senator Dill, who happens to be a friend of mine, if he would be willing to see Margaret Sanger, who was looking for some one to introduce her bill in the Senate. He replied that he would be very glad to see Mrs. Sanger, but doubted that she would meet with any success in this venture. Why is this information denied people? I am reminded of the old story of the fox, which thought that a large number of rabbits was commendable, even though they were eating up the farmer's cabbage. The situation in this respect is somewhat similar. The financiers, the manufacturers, the plantation and mine owners want an over-supply of cheap labor. Military leaders want plenty of cannon fodder for the next war. Politicians want plenty of the kind of votes that can be controlled. Bigoted re-

ligionists want crowds of ignorant people to bow before their superstitions. And because these various interests, banded together, control the legislative situation, we do not get birth control knowledge for all. They are not opposed to birth control. The size of their families show that they practice it; but they are opposed to its general practice because this might interfere with their particular schemes.

It is impossible to resist the conclusion that these highly moral ostriches are to blame. There needs to be an opening of the windows and a clearing of the air on this whole subject. The power of controlling conception has come to stay, and its coming is fraught with tremendous possibilities for good or evil. A new responsibility is laid upon men and women and they must see to it that they bear it rightly. Everything finally depends upon a wholesome public opinion, and that can come only as the great multitude of fathers and mothers bring this subject out into the light. Contraceptive knowledge, like everything else, is neither right nor wrong in itself, and neither are contraceptive methods. Whether they are right or wrong depends upon the circumstances under which, and the motives with which, they are used. Knowledge of the best, most effective and most hygienic methods ought to be made easily accessible to every married couple, rich and poor alike, and careful teaching as to the responsibility involved should be part of the preparation for marriage of every young man and woman.

I believe, therefore, that birth control is an important phase of that larger social control which must some day redeem the world from the ills which now oppress and even threaten to destroy it. It is the next step forward in the conscious control of human life, both to the end of individual happiness and of race improvement. It is a step made necessary not only by social and economic considerations, but by moral responsibility and religious idealism. The time has come for all who are sincerely interested in the progress of humanity to align themselves with this sane and eminently commendable movement. To co-operate with nature and at the same time exercise a guiding influence in the direction of human happiness can surely be called a matter of ethical and religious importance.

Religion In Russia

DURING the past two months there has been a storm of protest, embellished by lurid details of atrocities, against the religious policy of the Russian government. This policy has been stamped as one of cruel persecution, and the whole Christian church in every land is united as never before in a crusade against it. It has assumed the form of a militant organized movement, and promises to become a new and formidable factor in Russian affairs. The movement began on February 8th when the Pope, moved by the "numberless atrocities, ungodly campaign and wholesale arrest of Christians" as well as the "horrible and sacrilegious wickedness against God and the Russian people," called upon the whole Christian world to join him in a day of prayer for the cessation of "the Russian terror." His challenge was immediately taken up by the other churches. The very next day the French Protestant Federation passed resolutions of denunciation, and two days later the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Anglican Church, presented a scathing denunciation of Russian policy and proclaimed a day of prayer for the church of England to the same end. This was followed by a similar act on the part of Bishop Manning of New York, who declared that the Soviet government is using all the means within its grasp to destroy religion. Other denominations then took up the cry and have held mass meetings and prayer meetings in every quarter of Christendom, until we can say today that the Christian world is tremendously agitated, in some quarters inflamed, at what is conceived to be the state of religion in Russia.

And the religious world is not depending entirely upon prayer and protest. It is bringing pressure to bear upon the various governments and asking them to join in the movement. The British government has been put on the defensive to justify continuance of Anglo-Russian relations, and has been obliged to promise an investigation. France and Germany have both been asked to modify their attitude toward Russia in view of the disclosures. An appeal has been sent to President Hoover, and the question has been raised and discussed in both the House and the Senate. Also many lesser governments have seized the opportunity to arouse the bitter feelings against Russia which were just beginning to disappear. It is difficult to understand why this universal protest from religious groups should come just at this time—whether it represents the sincere fears of religious interest or merely propaganda from a new quarter to fan the flames of hatred for Soviet Russia; whether it has suddenly and spontaneously burst upon the world or has been carefully prepared over many months and suddenly and subtly thrust upon us. These questions naturally intrude themselves, for those who are conversant with the trend of affairs in Russia for the past decade realize that the situation now is precisely the same as it was two years ago or five years ago or even ten years ago. The famous decree of January 23, 1918, establishing the attitude of the government toward religion, is still the law of the land; and there is nothing new in the government's present attitude or recent acts affecting religion. Perhaps it is because these acts are just beginning to bear fruit and the people of the world are just now realizing that under them the Christian religion in Russia is doomed; not however because of any persecution, but because the church has been put absolutely upon its own without any grants or favors whatever from the government; and because an organized secular educational program has been rigorously carried through. There is no question about the attitude of the Bolsheviki toward the Christian church or about the drastic program which has been pursued; and there is no doubt that religion as it has been known, with its churches, its supernatural sanction, its gods and its creeds, is doomed in Russia. The Christian forces of the world realize this. They realize also the danger to Christianity the world over if Russia succeeds,

just as the world realizes the dangers to capitalism if she succeeds. This may be the reason why the Christian church has suddenly become alarmed. The only other reason that suggests itself is that the church is lending itself as a tool to economic and political interests.

I

To what extent are the charges of persecution founded on fact? It is very difficult to answer this question because of one's inability to get at the facts. It is necessary to penetrate clouds of calumny and misrepresentation, masses of undated and unproved allegations. Russia has been called the "land of lies," which is true only in the degree in which every country becomes a land of lies when political prejudice and religious bigotry are fanned to white heat. The cautious critic takes it for granted that the present situation is no exception. To those who have been reading and accepting without question the lurid details of Russian atrocities, such as appeared in a two page article in one of last Sunday's papers, by a colonel in the Czarist armies, I would like to give a vivid illustration by reversing the facts, taking an event in this country and showing how it was described by a radical paper in Germany.

You all remember the Communist demonstration in New York on March 6th in protest of the unemployment situation. For more than two hours they indulged in fiery speeches in Union Square without any disturbance whatever, then when they attempted to march to the City Hall without a permit the meeting was broken up by the police. There were about twenty minutes of vigorous pushing and chasing, some clubbing and a few arrests—a disgraceful affair to be sure and entirely successful from the standpoint of the police. An account of this affair appeared in the *Rote Fahne* of Berlin, and this is the way it read: "After the mass meeting, the workers in powerfully closed ranks marched, completely unmindful of the ban of police authorities, toward the city hall. The front ranks of the police force were broken at once. Undaunted the masses rolled forward and onward. In front of the City Hall the demonstrators were met by an army of twenty-five thousand police in full fighting military array. The demonstrators would not budge. As the police opened fire from machine

guns in the streets and from the roofs, an embittered man to man fight ensued and lasted late into the evening. The New York Police Commissioner, personally in charge of the massacre, was surrounded by the demonstrators and beaten till he bled. With great difficulty a shock regiment of police saved him. The bourgeois press asserts "Never before has New York lived through such a battle'." One has to live in Germany to get facts like this about America; and so one has to live in America to get such facts as we read about religious persecution in Russia.

For instance, not long ago we read the report that fourteen rabbis were about to be executed in Minsk; but when it developed that no rabbis were executed or even in danger of being executed, our newspapers forgot to make the correction. Again we were told that a noted monastery in Moscow was torn down and were given the impression that the monks were cruelly driven out and the building wantonly destroyed as an anti-religious demonstration; whereas the facts are that this building had been unused for more than ten years and that the residents of that crowded section had petitioned the city government to replace the uninhabitable structure with a much needed civic building. Another time we are shown the picture of a church which has been turned into a museum or a secular meeting house of some kind and given the impression that the worshippers were driven out and deprived of their church, whereas the church has merely become defunct because of non-support and non-attendance and the building was being put to some use. And while this has happened to a number of churches, it has not been so universal as we have been led to believe. One day the cable came from Russia that of the fifty thousand churches in that country the "Society of Atheists" claimed that three thousand four hundred and sixty had been closed during the last twelve years. The reports announced in certain quarters of this country that seventy thousand churches had been closed, which is twenty thousand more than actually existed. The number actually reported, and this was no doubt exaggerated because given out by enemies of the church, is not alarming; since more than one thousand, or one-third of that number, have been closed in the state of Ohio in the same period and for much the same reason—non-support.

Thus, when these stories are traced down they are found to be without any or with very little foundation. Perhaps the best evidence in this respect is found in the words of the Chief Patriarch of the Russian Church, who has recently told us that religion has never been and is not now subjected to persecution, that ministers have never been forbidden to conduct religious services, that the churches which were closed have been closed not by the authorities but upon request of the people, and that any repressions applied to believers and clergymen have been applied not for religious beliefs, but for anti-government acts, just as against other citizens. In fact, there are people who take the opposite view. Sherwood Eddy, who is one of the outstanding religious leaders of this country and who has spent a great deal of time in Russia during the past ten years is responsible for the statement that "the Soviet government has done more for the cause of religion in Russia in twelve years than Czarism had done in several centuries"; and David Rhys Williams, a Unitarian minister, who has also made a study of the situation from close observation agrees with him. Of course, these men have an entirely different idea of religion from that of the Pope and the other heads of the orthodox Christian church. I would not have you misled by these statements, however. There is no doubt that the Soviet government is doing everything it can to get rid of religion, at least as religion is understood in Russia, and there is little doubt that if the Soviet government succeeds politically it will also succeed in exterminating the Christian religion in that country. The question is whether they are doing it by the approved method of education and non-support or by the unjustifiable means of cruel repression and bloody persecution; and in order to understand the situation it is necessary to go back to the days of the revolution and see what the conditions then were and the policy then adopted and since followed.

II

There is no more shameful chapter in the history of religion than that which relates the story of the Russian orthodox church during the past two centuries; and this must be understood in order to grasp the significance of what has taken place during the past decade. During this period

the church was definitely connected with the state, with the Czar as its head, and prostituted its functions and its activities to the service of its master. It was the handmaid by which the state was able to keep the people in poverty and in ignorance and in subjection. It taught the people that they must obey absolutely and without question the dictates of the Czar; that the highest virtues were obedience, contentment, submission. It glorified poverty and encouraged the people to endure it, promising compensation in heaven. It made secular education a sin and was responsible for the overwhelming illiteracy of the Russian people. It opposed scientific effort of every kind, teaching the people that progress and success in every venture depended not upon effort but upon magic. It was responsible for the outrages perpetrated on Jews, and for the assignment of every one who questioned its authority or methods to the frozen plains of Siberia. But worst of all was its uncompromising attitude toward revolution. It did, perhaps, more than anything else to stay the revolution so long. It taught that revolution was a sin, and that all who listened to the wicked revolutionists would be doomed to eternal perdition. The whole might of its powerful organization was mobilized in support of the old regime, and most shameful of all its sacred institution of the Confessional was used for spying purposes.

This was the situation when the revolution came in 1917. The church and the state in Russia were practically identical, and an attack upon one was necessarily an attack upon the other. The revolution, in other words, was religious as well as political; and it met a more determined opposition in the church than in the state. The deposed priests immediately banded themselves together and in the name of God Almighty opposed the revolution. It fostered every counter-revolutionary attempt to destroy the new government. It laid claim to all the old privileges and insisted that the revolutionists keep their hands off it. On the other hand, it was agreed by the revolutionists, and this was in the days of Miliukov and Kerensky, that there were two changes which must be made in the Russian Church. One was the elementary reform of the separation of church and state—the union of which had been the bulwark of strength as well as the disgrace of the old government; and the other was the separation of the schools from the church—

the union of which had kept the Russian masses in ignorance. This meant, of course, that the warfare between the church and the revolution was on, but characteristic of the Kerensky government, it was not aggressively waged. Then came the Bolsheviki into power, and with all their faults these men could not be accused of weakness. They knew exactly what they proposed to do and they had the courage and the resolution to do it. The church immediately recognized that it had an enemy which meant business, and declared an open warfare against the revolution by issuing the famous message of the Patriarch, January 19, 1918. This document denounced the revolution, threatened with excommunication those who joined it, and appealed for an organization against the Bolshevik regime, denouncing them as "servants of Satan" and declaring that "the only salvation of the Russian people is a wise orthodox Russian Czar."

Four days later the Bolsheviks replied with the famous decree of January 23, 1918, "on freedom of conscience and religious societies." This is the document that broke the back of the Christian church by putting it entirely upon its own. It provided, in short, (1) that the church should be separated from the state; (2) that education should be taken entirely out of the hands of the church, and religious instruction be forbidden in all public and private schools where the children are under eighteen years of age; (3) that no law shall be enacted hindering freedom of conscience or granting privileges on the basis of church connection; (4) that any citizen shall be free to adhere to any religion or no religion; (5) that the free practise of religious customs shall be safeguarded by the state; (6) that all state and public functions should be unaccompanied by religious ceremonies; (7) that the religious oath in the courts should be abolished; (8) that the church should own no property; (9) that all existing church property should be declared the property of the people.

Now this is the famous decree which remains to this day the law of the land. It should be noticed that it recognizes the equality of all religious societies before the law; not only tolerates but safeguards every form of religious ceremony and custom; and guarantees to every citizen freedom of conscience in religion. In these matters the Soviet law is

identical with the law of the United States. It goes further, however, in completely secularizing the state by excluding from its functions religious ceremonies. In this respect it is identical with the law of France. In only two respects are its provisions new or in any way revolutionary. First, in the secularization of schools which is complete; and second, in the nationalization of church property, which are the real offences from the standpoint of the church. Even here, however, there was no discrimination against the church, for they treated it exactly like all other institutions and private enterprises, whose properties were also confiscated. Mark you, the government did not interfere with the uses of the property, but left the churches, rent free, in the hands of the congregations. It was the same with the churches as with the lands of the peasants. They were permitted to use them, but not own them. But these two decrees were the opening guns of a warfare that has continued during the last twelve years, and which is destined to continue; and this warfare has both a political and a religious aspect, which we must note briefly.

The political aspect has its origin in the fact that from the very first moment after the overthrow of the Czar, the church became the center of all counter-revolutionary activity. It was the one organized institution in the old regime which was left intact. It was an institution of great power. There were four hundred thousand priests and monks in the land, and millions of peasants immediately under their control. In addition, all the defeated enemies of the Bolsheviks now joined the ranks of the churchmen in a united effort to overthrow the Soviets. Generals and courtiers disguised themselves as priests and bishops. Mendicant monks became spies and travelling messengers of conspiracy. The church everywhere helped organize the white armies and conducted demonstrations against the government as well as pilgrimages to shrines to pray for the return of the Czar. In fact, the church became, not a religious organization at all, but a well organized conspiracy to crush the revolution; and the government handled this conspiracy as any government handles any conspiracy. When monasteries were found to be used as arsenals and forts, they were seized and closed; when generals were found masquerading as priests, they were shot; when high churchmen were found

conspiring against the government, they were tried for treason and put to death. The Bolsheviki were ruthless in suppressing sedition inside as well as outside the church, refusing to grant the church any special dispensation for counter-revolutionary activities. Hence the charge of persecution. But there was no persecution—at least not in the religious sense. Whatever persecution there was, was purely political. Wherever the church could show that its hands were clean so far as political conspiracy was concerned, it was permitted to perform its functions undisturbed.

But there was another aspect of this warfare between the church and the government, and that was religious. It would be a serious mistake to think that the Bolsheviki were friendly or even indifferent to religion. On the contrary they were, and are, hostile to religion, and would gladly get rid of it. Like all uncompromising materialists and atheists, they regard religion, as at best an innocent fantasy of ignorant minds and at the worst a deliberate fraud, an "opiate of the people." They saw religion, tied up as it is in Russia with ignorance and superstition, as the most formidable obstacle in the way of establishing the new commonwealth of Communism. Not only was its continuance a menace to the realization of their plans; but if it continued it would mean that their ideal society had not been realized. So the church must go. But they were too wise to make any direct attack upon the church; they knew that this would only drive the great mass of ignorant peasants more devotedly to its support, as well as arouse the whole Christian world. Furthermore, they were too contemptuous to make a direct attack. They felt that religion was an anachronism in the kind of world they proposed to build, and if left alone would disappear as people grew in intelligence and social idealism. So they established their policy of religious liberty, not because they believed in religion or even in liberty; but because they believed in their ability to emancipate the people by a system of education which the church would be unable to meet.

III

When they decided to leave religion alone, this does not mean that they were indifferent to it. No indeed. They saw to it that children should grow up without having it

thrust upon them at an early age. And it is here that we find the real explanation of the absolute secularization of education in Russia—the prohibition of religious instruction in either public or private schools for children under eighteen years of age—the nearest thing to religious persecution that can be found in Russia. Shutting off the growing generation from systematic religious instruction of every kind, the government has placed the children in public schools organized on the basis of the most modern and enlightened methods of education, but dominated throughout by the scientific and atheistic conception of the universe and of human life. Here is a new phenomenon in history—the subjection of the youth of a whole nation to the deliberate denial of religious instruction, except such as they receive in the home. What the result will be no one can foretell, but twelve years of this policy is bringing forth a new generation, apparently so indifferent to the church that the whole Christian world is shocked and aroused to protest. Against this method the church has set every influence of tradition and authority that it can muster; and so the warfare has continued between church and state for the allegiance of millions of boys and girls.

The Bolsheviks however have not stopped here. They are not content merely with the use of secular education for the children, but they carry on their attack also by means of propaganda among the adults. The rulers of present Russia have never concealed their hostility to religion, their fundamental atheism, nor their intent to use every legitimate means to uproot faith in God and supernatural powers. So they carry on a continuous and aggressive campaign of propaganda, using the press, picture posters, signs, and all kinds of dramatic means for depicting the conflict of science and religion as a fundamental one, and impressing the lesson that religion is identical with ignorance and stupidity and social backwardness. Shocking as this situation may appear to religious believers in other parts of the world, the methods of teaching and persuasion and protection from religious instruction just outlined do not involve the use of coercive force, and it is precisely the method which has been used by Christians everywhere for hundreds of years. The trouble is that when the shoe is put on the other foot it pinches, and Christianity today in

Russia is tasting a little of the medicine which it has administered to atheists and less radical unbelievers for centuries. What was sauce for the Christian goose however should also be sauce for the atheist gander. The signs all over Russia, reading "Religion is the opiate of the people," cannot be more offensive to the Christians than the non-sensical scripture passages which gospel-sharks have painted over all the landscape of America to unbelievers. And when it comes to religion, I would prefer almost anything to the ignorant, image-worshipping, priest-ridden Christianity that fattened on the credulity of a down-trodden and poverty-stricken people in Russia for centuries.

There is no doubt therefore that we have warfare in Russia between the church and the state, but such evidence as has come through disproves the charge of actual persecution. I have no doubt that there have been restrictions of religious freedom, which are incident to every kind of warfare and which have always been practised by any religion which has the upper hand. Surely the Christian church anywhere, especially in Russia, would not claim it has never restricted the freedom of those who did not agree with it. The church that excommunicated Tolstoi could hardly expect over-generous treatment from his fellow-revolutionists when they gained control. I have no doubt too that there have been sporadic outbursts of violence in different parts of the country, just as there were in this country during the evolution controversy a few years ago when Fundamentalist fanatics burned school libraries which contained scientific books. This, also, is incident to warfare, and is bound to appear occasionally when the lines are so rigidly drawn as they are in Russia; but these have never been sanctioned or even encouraged by the government. In fact, the government has recently issued a decree, stating that anyone interfering with the religious rights of others will be severely punished. So I think there has been no actual persecution. The best evidence confirms the belief that religious worship in Russia is in no way interfered with. Everywhere one finds large congregations of worshippers, receiving the customary ministrations of the priests; and while I might not agree with a contemporary historian that the policy of religious liberty in Russia today is unparalleled in history, I do feel that, considering the ruthlessness of the Bolsheviki

in regard to political and economic matters, and also considering the tremendous obstacle which the Christian church has been to the advance of their schemes, they have been unusually moderate and considerate in their treatment of religion.

IV

What then has produced the situation which causes the present state of alarm? I believe there are four things of major importance which have contributed to a condition in Russia which, if the present government succeeds, spell the doom of Christianity in that country.

In the first place, the Soviet government has separated the church from the state and has withdrawn from it not only every vestige of financial support, but also every bit of privilege and favor. In other words the church has been put on its own, like any other institution. Not only must it support itself financially by voluntary contributions, but it receives no encouragement of any kind from the state. Furthermore, it is not allowed to make assessments on its members, nor receive contributions from people who are not members. As a result, many of the churches, in spite of the fact that their buildings are free of rent, have been closed because their members are unable to keep them up. This is partly due to the fact that many people have lost their interest in religion, especially since they have learned that it is not able to produce the magical results which it promised, and are now reaping greater success through scientific methods; and also due to the fact that in the days of the Czar Russia was greatly overchurched, just as in this country you see four or five little struggling churches in a village that cannot support more than one. Now that these are no longer subsidized by the government, the people are wisely turning the superfluous ones into libraries, village clubrooms, art galleries, or other socially beneficent institutions. All this I believe is to the good—too many churches is a great economic waste, and surely a church that cannot command sufficient economic support ought to close its doors. And I am very interested in the result of this experiment. For the first time in the history of the world Christianity has been placed in this position, and I am interested to see what will become of it. Max Eastman

put it this way, "For the first time in the history of the world we have an opportunity to see what God is able and willing to do for his church."

In the second place, we have here a purely secularized education, dominated by the scientific and atheistic point of view. We have secular education in this country too, but it is administered and taught by people who are Christians and therefore always approached from the Christian point of view. But here it is the opposite—the point of view is atheistic, and no religious instruction outside the home previous to the age of eighteen. The purpose here is to give the children a scientific and historical background with which to judge the respective merits of the various religious faiths claiming their allegiance, hoping of course that they will decide in favor of atheism. But they claim this is the just thing to do, because any religion which cannot win the allegiance of a person who has had a scientific and historical education is not worthy of allegiance. In this country we do just the opposite. In our Sunday Schools we stamp children's minds with a conception of religion long before they have reached the ability to discriminate, a conception which they find it difficult to surrender at a later period. It is easy to visualize the effects of this rigid secular training. Where would the churches in America be today if they were not permitted to train the children in their respective doctrines and take them into membership by the thousands before they are eighteen? Well, that is what is happening in Russia, and now that it has been going on for twelve years the results are becoming evident. The younger generation has no interest in the church. Trained as they have been in the belief that it represents only superstition and is a tremendous handicap to the progress of mankind, in most cases they become not only indifferent, but active enemies of the church.

In the third place, the Communists in Russia have subjected religion to the most searching and most challenging criticism it has ever received. The old creeds and dogmas, ceremonials and ecclesiastical practises have held sway for centuries in that country, with little or no intellectual opposition. There could be none, for agitation of any kind against the Christian church was a criminal offense. Now a change has taken place. Religion for the first time has been obliged

to stand up and justify itself before the minds of the Russian people; and of course anyone who knows anything about the Russian church, can understand what an embarrassing time it is having. For instance, there was scarcely a church in Russia which did not have its sacred relics or incorruptible saint, which were used as instruments of magic for almost everything from the producing of crops to the curing of disease. Of course all this was a monstrous fraud perpetrated on an ignorant and unsuspecting people; and the Communists have exposed the frauds, in some instances opening the coffins and showing that the supposed incorruptible saints were fakes made out of wax. Now the ignorant people of Russia were held to the church more by this magic than by anything else, and the exposure of it has had a tremendous effect upon their attitude toward religion.

In the fourth place, Christianity has in Russia a competitor in Communism, which is itself a kind of religion. At least, it is trying to satisfy all the human needs usually associated with religion. It teaches a definite attitude toward life and the universe in scientific materialism, and a code of ethics directed toward the establishment of social justice. It has its own ceremonies for marriages and funerals and other sacred occasions, its own bible in the writings of Karl Marx and its own prophet in the person of Lenin. It commands of its adherents the depth and intensity of emotional fervor that is usually associated with religion; and intellectually it seeks to cover the whole scope of human life. It develops a passion for a better world order, making missionaries of all its members, who are prepared to live or to suffer or even to die for the propagation of the faith. It supplies all the earnestness, the exaltation, the sense of consecration, as well as the self-righteousness and the intolerance of every missionary religion. And in competition with this the mummified corpse of Christianity in Russia is unable to succeed.

V

Now insofar as the present agitation is the result of purely religious interests, I think it is due to the fact that the Christian churches in other countries are just waking up to the results of this policy and realizing that if it be pursued indefinitely Christianity will disappear in Russia. Therefore

they rise in protest and under the stress of emotional excitement greatly exaggerate the situation and fill the minds and hearts of people with hatred which may have disastrous results. For example, a preacher in London declared, "The persecution of the Christians in Russia is the most abominable thing since the days of Nero." He evidently has forgotten about the period of the Inquisition. The Bishop of London himself said, "Bishops in Russia have been butchered and thousands of priests and nuns have been murdered." A Philadelphia clergyman said, "One hundred and forty millions of souls are being barred from Christianity with nothing being offered to take its place." A priest in New York before three thousand people exclaimed, "Over six thousand bishops and priests have been massacred. Russia today is organized to wage war for the destruction of almighty God. People are penalized with death if they even speak of worship." Such statements can do no good. They may do great harm. But we cannot join in any such demonstration, partly because when I gaze upon that Russian church and think of all the ignorance and superstition which it has fostered and all the cruelty and torture which it has practised, I can look upon its disappearance with perfect complacency; and partly because its disappearance will clear the ground for real religion, even though it call itself anti-religion. I do not condone anything that can rightly be named persecution, I do not believe in any interference with the religious liberties of any people, no matter how different they may be from mine, but I always rejoice to see ignorance and superstition dissolved by the acids of science and education. I have no sympathy with the blatant and dogmatic atheism of the Bolsheviks, but I have no desire either to interfere with their rights. I deeply deplore the situation in Russia, but I am not discouraged by it. I have a tremendous faith in the intellectual ability and moral idealism of the Russian people; and I have no doubt that out of the seeming chaos, there will in time develop a religion based on science, devoted to the building of the good world—a religion equal to the needs of that great country both in precept and in practise. I do not believe that we need worry about the status of religion in Russia. Real religion there now has a greater chance than it ever had under the Christian church in the

days of the Czarist government.

Finally, insofar as this agitation has a political basis, it stands condemned. It allies the churches of America with the political forces which seek the destruction of the Soviets. It puts the church in politics in a most embarrassing way. It is an extremely dangerous business, and some even think it carries within it the seeds of world war. One thing is sure, the Russian government is interpreting it as another attempt of capitalistic countries to overthrow the Communist regime, and this tends to confirm the Russian government in its attitude that the Western world conspires against her. As John Dewey says, "Although many have protested on genuinely religious grounds, nevertheless they have entered upon a campaign charged with dynamite." So far as it has any religious effect upon Russia it will intensify opposition to religion, confirming the belief that the church is at bottom a political and economic agency. It will arouse the same feeling that would be aroused among us by any sign of foreign interference in what we regard as our own internal affairs. It will strengthen the isolationist party; it will intensify its militaristic activity; it will widen the breach between Russia and the remainder of the world; it may lead eventually to war. There is no telling what will happen when religionists get thoroughly aroused.

Not only will it have this dreaded effect upon Russia, but insofar as it has any political or economic basis, it must be deplored because it is in violation of that great principle, which has been so seriously disregarded in the past decade, of the right of any nation to govern itself as it so desires and to practise such religion as it sees fit. We must let his holiness Pope Pius XI and his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and his reverence the Bishop of New York understand that we cannot be bluffed into a war to suppress a nation's right of self-government through appeal to our emotional and religious prejudices. I am far from being a Communist. I do not believe in the autocratic methods of the Bolsheviki. But I shall ever uphold that sound American principle, laid down by Thomas Jefferson, when he said, "We certainly cannot deny to other nations that principle whereon our government is founded, that every nation has the right to govern itself internally under what form it pleases."

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